

"SPARKS"

"STATIC ROOM LOG" OF

THE WIRELESS PIONEERS

Volume 1 - Number 2

"SPARKS"

SPRING - 1974



Jack Binns won fame in sea annals for flashing first wireless call for help.



S.S. REPUBLIC....White Star Liner en route New York for Gibraltar and Mediterranean ports was rammed and sank JAN. 23 1909 off Martha Vineyard, Mass. 1600 lives were saved by JACK BINNS, wireless operator of the Republic (MKC) who flashed word of the collision to Jack Irwin on duty at "SC" Siasconset, Mass. Story in next POC. Photo from collection of Harry E. Rieseberg.





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OMITTED FOR THIS EDITION.

The SOCIETY OF WIRELESS PIONEERS is a non-profit, non-partisan and non-political organization of "PROFESSIONAL" wireless and radio operators (Active and retired) who have bonded together for the purpose of recording the history and memorabilia of the early days of this mode of communications (which has had great impact on world civilization and development). Since many of our members were the "pioneers" in this new field of electronic communications, we feel the heritage and accomplishments of these early years should be preserved for posterity. The Society hopes through its publications, to record and document the technical and operational history of an era rich in accomplishment. The Historical Papers, Tales of the Wireless Pioneers and the Journal of nostalgic contributions by members will be bound in this release called . . . "SPARKS". Distribution is free to all sustaining members and copies will be furnished Libraries and Technical Institutions, National Archives, etc., that indicate interest therein. While care has been exercised in reviewing the historical papers and operational Mss. furnished the Society, we can not assume responsibility for their complete authenticity although care is taken to check validity. Permission is granted for reprinting of material in this publication provided credit line is given the Society and author (except where article is marked "Reprinted by Permission") SPARKS is scheduled for Quarterly publication. Please include S.A.S.E with Mss/Pix. for return. It may be noted that Much material comes from SWP members who donate it to the Society. Address all Mss/Business to address in lower left column. Qualified individuals are invited to join if they have had qualifying experience.

William A. Breniman

"SPARKS"

"STATIC ROOM LOG" OF
THE WIRELESS PIONEERS

Volume 1 Number 2

"SPARKS"

Summer Edition - 1974



Good Morning!

"Hi" ... Old Timer. How are you this fine day? TOPS! ... Great!

Tried to get this out in April but as you can see, "FO" our Cartoonist (Ralph Folkman) down Cleveland way had to have his little APRIL FOOL joke with the Ship's Computer, so we didn't quite make it. However, here it is and I hope you like it!

I really enjoyed the fine response from the initial issue. We got literally hundreds of letters. They all said about the same thing only in different ways... "ON COURSE!" It sure was heartwarming and rewarding. Think it even chipped off on Eb Cady, John Elwood, Bob Shrader and others!

Now before you get too far into this issue, lets sit down and talk a bit about ... PLANS AHEAD. Perhaps you have already guessed it. We will put out at least one more edition of PORTS O' CALL - perhaps more. The one in the works now should be out by early fall. It is about 50% complete. Many have ordered extra copies and they are on file. I am a bit embarrassed at the amount of time it has taken to publish this issue and if you are tired of waiting (I do not blame you) we'll refund your money or credit your account. HOWEVER, we are reasonably sure it will be quickly sold out and we will be crying for copies... so at this early date we'll make you an offer: If you return your 1974 POC in first-class Condx... we'll refund \$2.50 or credit your account with same. Think about that a moment. If you return the copy, dues for 1974 will only cost you \$2.50.

Another important note. A few members have not paid their 1974 dues. Obviously, due to increasing cost of publishing and mailing expenses, we will have to drop those from the list who have not responded to past calls for sustaining dues. We do not have the time or facilities for sending repeated notices about dues. We feel those who enjoy the Society will respond without such notice. Of course, letters do get lost etc. We'll be reasonable and for sure ... any old timer who is having a bit of struggle with annuity that doesn't stretch, ill, etc. Don't worry. Your copies will keep coming along.

Now for the real kicker... We hope to increase both the size and frequency of SPARKS. Also, we hope to issue our NETBUL

as a MONTHLY SPARKS NETBUL and mail to all hands whether they have ham stations or not. That will keep you updated on all the important 'scuttlebut' aboard the SS. OZONE. We have bought a bit of equipment that should help in collating and mailing and a gal to help who is a 'whiz' on the mill.

WHAT WE DO NEED is your stories of all kinds, pictures and memorabilia that can be used. You see examples of what we need in this copy of Sparks....Many members have had experiences that should be recorded for posterity. This is the place to do it. The Anecdotes and short stories will go in the "JOURNAL" while lengthy experiences will find their way aboard the ...TALES OF THE WIRELESS PIONEERS. I am sure Henry Dickow would have been pleased with his 'brain-child'. 73 de Bill Breniman



"SURE, IT'S GOT POSSIBILITIES—BUT WE HAVE TO BREAK IT OF THAT NASTY HABIT OF CALLING OTHER SHIPS, THEN SAYING 'APRIL FOOL'."

The

STRANGE WORLD OF 'SPARKS'



The world of the Radio Operator is a unique one. Not only does he have the opportunity of visiting 'far away places with strange sounding names' but he has to learn to live with a terminology and nautical slang that is strange and different.

For example: While officially he may be signed on as the ship's Radio Officer, he suddenly becomes "SPARKS" to all of the crew members. When he uses a typewriter, it suddenly becomes a "mill". In sending messages he 'tickles' his 'bug' unless he has a 'glass-arm'. The rotary gap suddenly becomes a 'rock crusher' and when he receives messages his detector is usually a 'cats whisker' to find the most sensitive spot on his hunk of 'rock' (galena).

Sometimes he has to jar the Chief Engineer's compass to have the 'juice' turned on. When all goes well, the sigs slide off his 'sky hook' without trouble unless QRM or QRN give him a bad time.

Sometimes people ashore call him a 'Jack Tar' or an 'Old Salt' unless he is out of work when they call him a 'beachcomber.' Of course when assigned he takes his 'ticket' aboard the 'rust-bucket' and puts it up in the shack where he stands his 'trick'. Some even sport 'pink' tickets--they are the elite!

While the ship is working cargo he has to watch out for the 'winch hog' or 'winchie' who drives the winches that control the slings. He also has to watch out for the 'reindeer' who are the fast handed-truckmen shuttling cargo. Guard against the 'pile-drivers' who are the careless winchmen who set their load down hard or the 'appleknockers' who may be a green hand at the winch.

Once aboard he becomes acquainted with 'Bucko' the mate, Dicky, the Second Officer and 'The Old Man' who might still be in his late twenties or early thirties. The Old Man is the "Skipper" of the 'Oil-can' if she is a tanker, a 'Reefer' if she carries refrigerated cargo, a 'pig-boat', if she is a submarine, a cattle-boat or if Sparks has enough sen-

iority, he might 'pull' an assignment on a 'Greyhound' that sails the 'Western Ocean' to Europe.

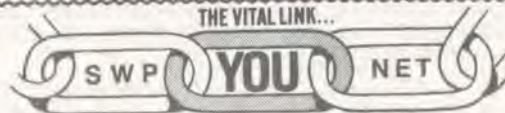
Some Ops enjoy assignments on 'Hurrah-boats' which are excursion steamers. Others sail on a 'pick-pocket' which means a boat of small cargo capacity. A 'Banana-boat' which carries the golden fruit from the Carib to various ports, North and South, while others are content on a 'Tramp' and wouldn't sail anything else.

In sailing the 'Main', Sparks will probably cross "The Line" which might be the equator in which event he will be initiated by King Neptune and party. Perhaps initiated isn't the word but he will be painfully aware that Davy Jones and all of the denizens of the deep carry out their appointed missions with dispatch and aplomb even if dignity fails to prevail. Of course the 'line' might be the 'Sunday-Monday Line' if you are sailing the 'drink' across the Pacific which means crossing the 180th parallel of longitude. Your route may take you through the 'Roaring Forties' where you can expect some 'heavy weather' (generally between 40 and 50 degrees North or South Latitudes. The Gulf is generally the Gulf of Mexico, The 'Medi' refers to the Mediterranean, Salt Chuck is Puget Sound, The Potato Patch is a stretch of water at the tip of Coney Island where the currents of Gravesend and the ocean mingle and cause bad eddies; Cape Stiff refers to Cape Horn; Cross Roads of the World - Panama Canal; Down under refer to the antipodes--especially Australia, New Zealand and Tasmania. Hululand Hawaii, Limeyland is England, Newfie, Newfoundland. Sable Island is known as the Graveyard of the Atlantic and your port of destination is sometimes known as 'Hole in the Beach'. Carib of course refers to a voyage into the Caribbean.

Of course blue-water sailors include all nationalities. The 'herring-snapper' is usually a Nova Scotia or Newfoundland seaman and a Down-Easter hails from Maine. The true Blue Nose is a Nova Scotia seaman while a Lascar is an East Indian. The Frogs come from France and the Krauts from Germany. The Yankees and the Limeys usually fight the Revolutionary war all over again when they meet in a bar shoreside. Decision always indecisive. A 'Swensker' is a Swedish seaman while a Scandihoo-vian, Scowegian or Scandiwegian refers to a Scandinavian.

Continued on Page 5

THE VITAL LINK...



Strange World

A ship usually has its roster of 'characters'. The 'Forecastle rat' is a spy for the officers or owners; JONAH is usually a sailor who brings bad luck to the ship. The Sea-dog or Sea Stiff is usually found on the 'tramp' steamers. The sea-lawyer is usually an egotistical and talkative sailor; a sea-pig likes his chow. Deckaroo is the term sometimes used for the deck hands while the 'Black Gang' work below in the engine room. Five or Sixer usually loans money to fellow ship-mates. You take five and pay back six (dollars, pounds, pesetas, guilders, etc.). A number tender may jump ship while a number eleven will complete the round trip. A rain squad is a sea-sick sailor while a 'peanut' is a comic cut-up. Tom Pepper is one who tells 'tall' stories. A shell-back, Barnacle or old salt are all 'old timers' while a 'seagull' or 'snow-ball eater' are all retired seamen.

Endearing names reserved for the inexperienced seamen are often called any of the following pet names: Cherrypickers, plow coxwains, fresh-water sailors, landlubbers, fair weather sailors, hooshiers, landlubbers, soogee sailors, swabs, etc.

Since weather and state of the sea is of prime interest to SPARKS who has to collect such info the peculiar terminology has a meaning all of its own. Dirty Sky is a cloudy, stormy sky; Muzzler or nose-ender is a head wind while a dead-muzzler is a hard head-wind. A soldier's wind is generally a beam or favorable wind. Q is a squall or squally weather while a 'stiff' un is a gale. A living gale is a furious gale. A Nor'wester as the name implies is a Northwest Gale while you would call it a Chocolate Gale if sailing the West Indies.

Dutchman's breeches is a patch of blue sky while a Dutchman's Cape (or Cape Flyaway) is a cloud on the horizon mistaken for land. Cat's tails, cocktails, colt's tail, mare's tale, etc., are types of cirrus clouds having the appearance of a cat's tail. Sea-grass is a mass of small hairlike cirrus clouds presaging a storm. A 'pea-souper' is a very heavy fog while the cock's eye is a sudden gleam of sunshine in a dark sky. The Devil's smile is spots of sunshine during stormy weather.

When watching the ocean you may see the 'Merry Men of May' which are currents caused by ebbing tides; Popple - an irregular sea, Dirty water and a pecky sea means a rough choppy sea while if you are sailing the far north you may observe 'ice pan' which is caked ice on the sea or 'land trash' cakes of ice near the shore.

Perhaps man does not live on bread alone - but it sure helps. Fond memories of chow aboard the old hooker? We still recall the Dandy Funk which is a pudding of hardtack and molasses; The 'fish eyes' or tapioca pudding; Sea Pie which is resurrection bolly or pie with fish, sand or sea dust. Resurrection pie by the way is leftovers of meat and vegetables cooked in decks between layers of dough. Punk of course is bread while Irish horse is tough corned beef. Canned monkey is embalmed beef while Monkey-meat is canned beef. Salt horse is salt beef, and Salt Junk is tough salt beef. Chicken is often referred to as 'Sea Gull Stew' while those who like fish will enjoy Cape Cod turkey which is salted codfish; Salmon is sea beef or pork while a can of Sharks is a can of sardines. We wash this down or 'mug up' with Moke although some 'go round the buoy' which means to have a second helping. All seamen are a hungry lot. Later we may have a little Cape Horn rainwater (rum) or a 'Second mate's nip' which is suiked with full measure of

liquor. Many sailors SPLICE THE MAIN BRACE (mostly for fatigue) after a hard night fighting QRM/QRM or weak sigs. (This usually in cold or cool (?) weather. When we land a new assignment, we have been known to 'wet our stripes' in celebration thereof.

Of course one who can not control his intake or is slightly inhibited might be described as being 'owash' or primed to the 'plimsoll mark'. He might also be well-spliced or moored in sots bay. Some might be charged with being a sheet in the wind or even four sheets in the wind, watertight with full cargo aboard, under too much sail, etc. etc.

Some of the daily routine we get used to is the Mate (and or others) shooting Charly Noble every day at noon. Not with a gun, with a sextant (to fix the ship's position). We get a 'time-tick' from NSS, etc. Occasionally we join the Suicide Club when we have a dangerous job such as antenna work, etc. We watch the mate 'Jog the horse' or ride 'em down the maintack which means to work or drive the crew hard.

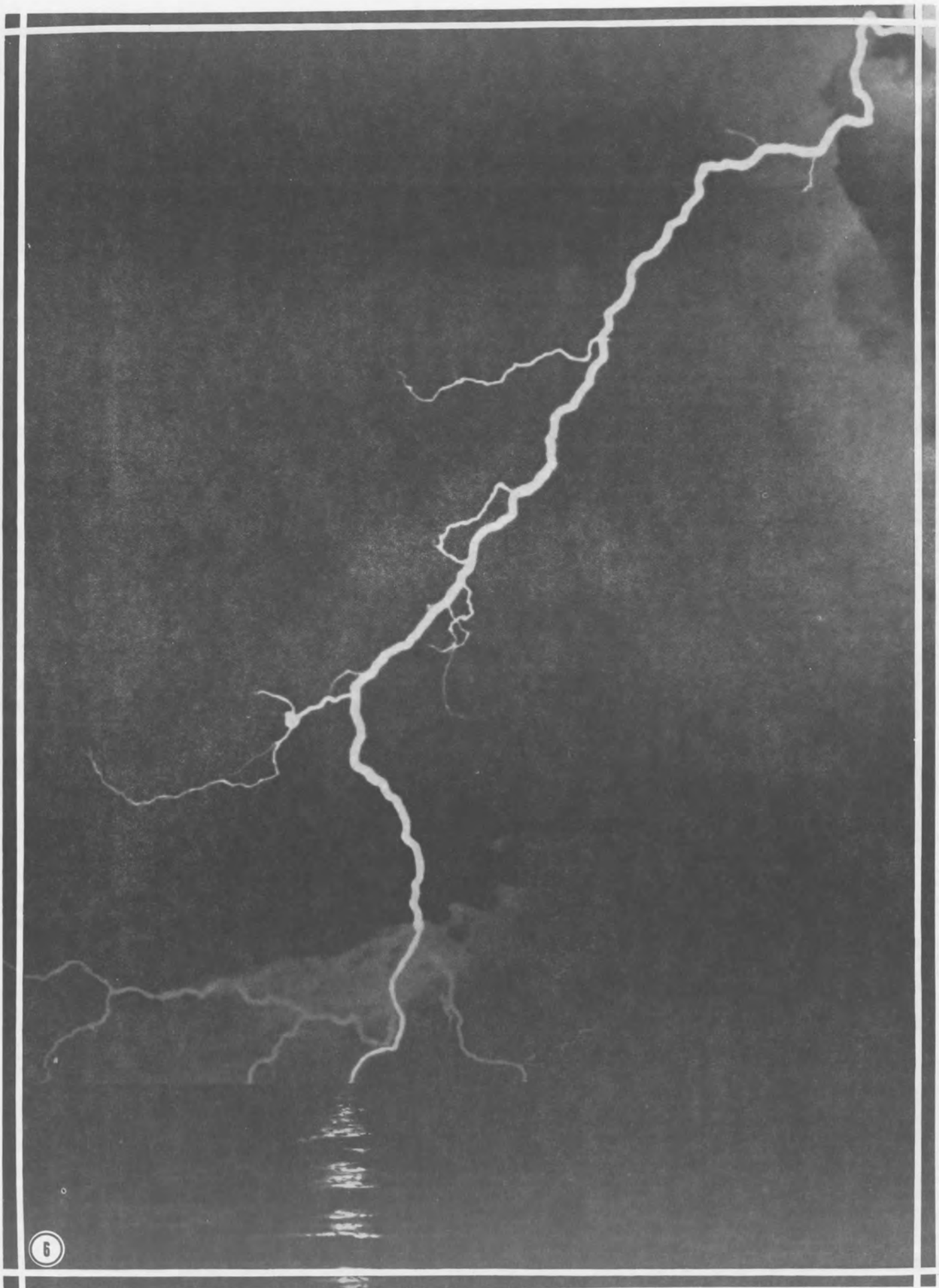
Finally the day comes when we 'Swallow the Anchor'. This means that we quit the sea. Some day we 'hit the beach' or have 'channel fever'. We know that we have not shammed Abrahams or worked a Tom Cox's traverse.

At peace with the world, we can ride at anchor and catch some well earned garden steerage after a long tour of duty. We will guard against buying a white horse (squandering our money) and will catch the tide (seize the opportunity) of putting down the hook as we fly the red flag at the mast-head (to be in earnest) while carving out a spot in the Fiddlers Green (a seaman's place in after-life). So in conclusion I will give one and all a 'Shake of my starboard fore lift' (shake hands) as I say '30' and sail into the Sunset.

--Bill Breniman



"WONDER HOW IT WOULD GO
ON SEAWEED SALAD."





Man Against The Sea

By - Charles Boyd Lee, 241-P

The night is ominous - darkly ominous. Cloud shapes scurrying, dense and black. A harassed moon dodging warily the forbidding masses - seeking refuge. Stars - the hardy ones - making themselves scarce. Lightning streaking an angry sky. Out of the northwest the hurrying gales - driving - tearing - rending. Seas running, breaking, pounding. The "Sea Pride" once again wallowing perilously, fighting for her life - just short of her goal!

It is nearing midnight but I see what is happening as plainly as if it were mid-day!

"Sea, Wind and Sky, you listen to me! What do you think you are doing? I can see so don't lie to me! Why do I ask? You know why! I want to see if you can answer me with a straight face while you play your cowardly game with a gallant ship!

"You know the ship of which I speak! She wallows helplessly now on what you would make her last voyage! There's still a one and one half inch steel towing cable at her bow and seven hundred fifty yards ahead is one of the world's mightiest tugboats! So don't talk to Davey Jones yet!

Oh, I know! You're smart! You plan very cleverly when you plan! You are disorderly as all hell but you are clever enough to throw doubt! Believe me, I know about your graveyard of ships on the Cornish coast! What seafarer doesn't?

"You've been playing with the "Sea Pride" like a beast with its prey! No doubt it pleases you to see her dragged like this toward your graveyard. Why do I protest so much? That's my business! Just as yours is the old Cat and Mouse game! Let me tell you this much! The mouse gets away from the cat sometimes! Remember that!

"What's that? You want to be orderly in case the ship can't be saved? Why litter up the ocean floor in every direction with dead ships? Orderly, indeed! Isn't that funny?

"Go ahead, play your little game! Do your best - and your worst! The Pride yet may sneak past your graveyard and make it to port!

"Listen, Wind, stop that crazy, raucous laughing! I see what you're doing! You and that devilish sea! You've got the Pride wallowing to eighty degrees again! That's sporting of you, real sporting! You made eighty five in your last blow! Are you going to try for ninety five this time? Better be careful or she won't make it to your graveyard! You'll have yourself a nice mess right out here on your parlor floor! Like the dirty cats that you are!

"I'd be ashamed of myself! Why are you so determined to defeat a man like the Skipper of the "Sea Pride"? What possible satisfaction can you get out of it? Don't you appreciate a clean fight?

"Look at him! Living more on the bulkhead than on deck for two weeks! Rode the rolling, pitching Pride alone for the first week, without light, without heat, existing on scraps of food! Then it pleased you to allow the Mate of the tugboat to come aboard! You knew he was needed to help the Captain heave in the towing cable! Otherwise, the ship might not reach your nice graveyard on the nearby coast! You don't really like messes on your parlor floor, do you?

"Time and again when he moved about a ship whose decks were more vertical than horizontal, you've drenched him, chilled him to the marrow and almost succeeded in washing him overboard!

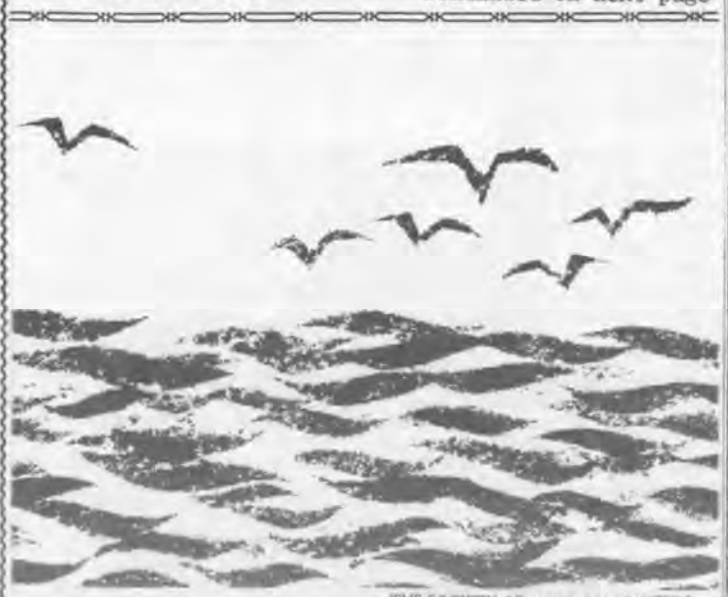
"Do you think it was nice to have his ship cracked amidships and sent into a 60 degree list? I'll grant you behaved gentlemanly about his passengers and crew! You didn't claim a single one of them and you easily could have! Oh, you have your moods, don't you?

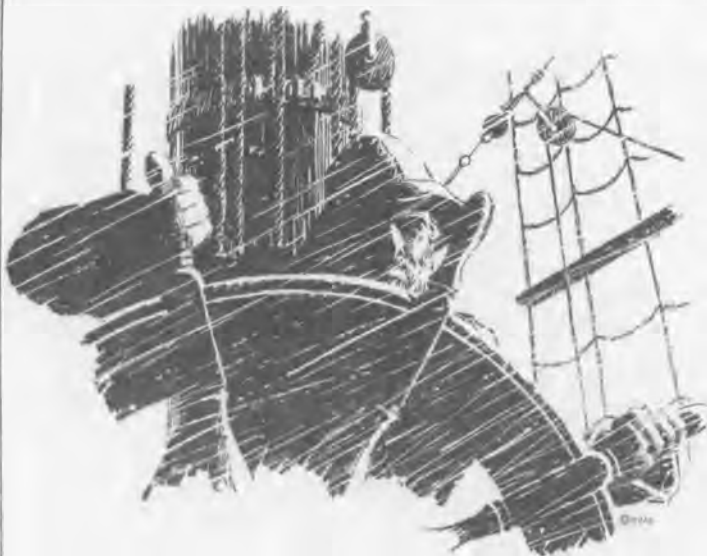
"But for some reason or other you seem hell-bent on beating this man and his ship! Some reason, did I say? Hell, I know the reason without asking! You don't like to be defied! That's it, pure and simple!

The night is ominous - darkly ominous - and black cloud shapes still ride an angry sky - a sky with little moon and no stars. The black clouds which threatened now spill liquid cargo on a defenseless ship! The ship pitches, rolls, bows and scrapes. Like a dog before her master - begging forgiveness - forgiveness for being weak - unable to keep up her pace in the great ocean lanes - her head up to the sea! Seas which break and roar - break like a triphammer - roar like a thousand lions!

No rain collects in the scuppers now - not starboard - not port! To starboard they point very nearly to zenith and to port they are already prisoners of the deep.

Continued on next page





CHARLIE LEE - SEE PAGE 7

Seas which break and maul - run easily twenty-foot high. A smokestack which all but touches the water - a smokestack which offers shocking display and invites stares at her vitals by anyone ahead.

"Listen to me, Immensities, how long do you think the towline will last at this rate? Fools, don't say I didn't tell you! You're stubborn! I know that!

"Say, you know something! I'm beginning to like you in a way! You're terrible but you're magnificent, too! Serene, beautiful at times - but always stubborn!

"Stubborn! You're like a stubborn cuss of a Skipper from out Pacific coast way! You probably know him. Name's "Midnight" Olsen! Known by that name by a thousand skippers! Got it from crossing the bar at midnight. Crosses the bar any damn time he pleases! As stubborn as they come! Stubborn as you are! Which is stubborn!

"But you know I'm liking you better now! I'll even let you in on a little secret that I happen to know! That Skipper on the Pride and his tugboat Mate are determined to defeat you in case you try to take them down with the ship. You want to know what they've done? They've rigged up a rope astern to use if they have to leave! You see they don't figure that you'll sink her stern-first. I just mention that for what it's worth Think nothing of it!

"It's almost midnight now and I keep thinking of "Midnight" Olsen! Olsen and his crossing the bar at midnight! Such a stubborn Skipper you never saw! Midnight! Do you think there's anything in a name? You do? Prophetic? Where he's going it will be eternal midnight? Go on! What have you got against "Midnight" Olsen? From away out Pacific coast way!

"Oh, oh, now you've done it! You've snapped the towline! You've played hell now! No ship without steerage way could last in this savage brew that you've cooked up!

"The Sea Pride's Captain and his Mate better get forward with a hacksaw! Quick or the towline itself will capsize her! Quick, Captain! Hurry, Mate!

SOCIETY OF WIRELESS PIONEERS

"There they go! Not quickly! Slowly, laboriously. One hand hold after another along the starboard rail. Man alive, they have to be acrobats but they're making it!

"They're there now! On the fo'cstle head! The Captain holds on with one hand and starts sawing with the other hand. The Mate holds himself with one hand and holds the Captain with the other. The Captain works like a man possessed. He's biting into steel now. He bites deeper. The Mate wants to spell him but he refuses. He wants to keep at the job. Every minute - every stroke of every minute counts. The hacksaw bites through. Bravo! The towline parts and falls away never to succor or menace a ship again! The Captain holds on with both hands trying to recapture his breath in the mighty gusts. The Mate struggles, too! To keep his slim handhold on life and to wrestle with the gale for enough air to fill his lungs . . .

"Now listen, Sea, you've got her settling stern-first! That's playing dirty as hell! That's where the Captain and Mate have the rope! They want to leave astern and have a little time to get clear! You know that! Now they're trapped up forward and she's rising by the head! Hellfire! I shouldn't have trusted you with their plan!

"What dirt - savage, inexcusable dirt! I see you now - once again - for what you are! Savage, brutal, primeval! Calm, beautiful - magnificent at times - but always primeval!

"Who am I to talk to you like this? As if, oh, Sea, oh Wind, oh Sky, you don't know!

"I'm the Sea Pride's Captain! I'm "Midnight" Olsen!"



HOW COME THEY CALL THIS A "TELEGRAPH" - AND YOU CAN'T EVEN SEND CODE ON IT?

FOR THE SAME REASON THAT THE ONLY "SOLID STATE" STUFF AROUND HERE IS BETWEEN YOUR HEADPHONES!

Folkman - WCAP

THOSE FAMOUS PILOTHOUSE JOUSTS



S.O.W.P. CHAPTER NEWS

THE SOCIETY OF WIRELESS PIONEERS

CHAPTER OFFICERS

CHAPTER - I - GOLDEN GATE

EBEN K. CADY - DIRECTOR (Acting *)
BUTLER OSBORNE - PROGRAM DIRECTOR.

(*) Mr. Cady has taken over until elections can be held this fall to elect a new Director and other officials. Regretfully our chosen Director has been unable to attend or handle functions of his office as he is away on business most of the time.

CHAPTER III - DOCTOR LEE de FOREST

CHARLES B. LEE - DIRECTOR

The Offices of Secretary and Treasurer are open due to the incumbent having to resign on account of health. New officers to be selected for these positions at the next election in June.

CHAPTER IV - OTIS MOORHEAD

EVERETT G. HENRY - DIRECTOR
EDMUND H. MARRINER - SECRETARY
BRANDON WENIOWORTH - TREASURER

CHAPTER V - JACK BINNS (PACIFIC NORTHWEST)

WILLIAM A. FULLER - DIRECTOR
THERON C. PATTEN - SECRETARY/TREASURER
TOM A. JOBS (W7TU) - CHIEF OPERATOR.
DR. ERSKINE H. BURTON - HISTORIAN
JOHN A. PEEL - AREA REPRESENTATIVE - PORTLAND, ORE.

CHAPTER VI - GUGIELMO MARCHESE MARCONI

ARTHUR W. "Bill" FILTNESS - DIRECTOR
RICHARD W. GUY - SECRETARY
WILLIAM P. CORSON - TREASURER
JOHN C. BUTT - MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

CHAPTER VII - THOMAS A EDISON

WILLIAM C. "Bill" WILLMOT - DIRECTOR
FRANKLIN ATLEE - SECRETARY////DANA G. BARBER -
KARL H. W. BAARSLAG - HISTORIAN \ TREASURER
ALAN C. HINSHELWOOD W4BVE - CHIEF OPERATOR

CHAPTER IX - ARIZONA/PACIFIC SOUTHWEST

CHARLES F. BLAKE - DIRECTOR
W. H. "Wally" LELAND - SECRETARY/TREASURER

CHAPTER X - WASHINGTON, D.C. (*)

JOHN F. "Tex" De BARDELEBEN - ORGANIZING CHAIRMAN
(See News item elsewhere)

CHAPTER XI - ELMO N. PICKERILL

CHARLES E. MAASS - DIRECTOR / TREASURER (Acting)
DON MASTEN - SECRETARY
RAY CONNELL - PROGRAM CHAIRMAN
LEROY GODELJ. - HISTORIAN
JACK SCHANTZ - CHIEF OPERATOR
ARTHUR J. LOBE - AREA REPRESENTATIVE

CHAPTER XVI - GONZALES (VANCOUVER ISLAND)

CHAPTER XVI - GONZAELS (Vancouver Island)

JACK BOWERMAN - HONORARY DIRECTOR
DAVID A. SMITH - SECRETARY-TREASURER
LES HAMMER - AREA REPRESENTATIVE

SOUTHERN CROSS CHAPTER - AUSTRALIA

WILLIAM J. O'BRIEN - DIRECTOR
FRANK CAREY - PRESIDENT
LAURIE MCGOWAN - SECRETARY/TREASURER

Capital Chapter Forming

When you want something done - you ask a BUSY MAN to do it... the other have no time! This was probably the approach "Pete" Fernandez used on "Tex" De Bardeleben (W4TE) when he put his magic finger on him and said with a simulated Texas drawl... "Now lookee here you-all, we don't seem to get much dip between readings of Pickerill on the North and Edison in the far south." (This he said between a couple of mint juleps) "How about organizing a chapter along 'FOGGY BOTTOMS' so we can get a dip on our decremeter?"

Tex, (and XYL Ethel) who have been 'guiding lights' of the publication "AUTO CALL" which is the voice of some thirty plus amateur clubs around Washington took him up on the deal. Tex put out his initial notice on March 28th to SWP members in the area. The response very favorable with far more than the necessary charter members required to form a Chapter.

A dozen or so chapter names have been suggested. TWO MEETINGS ARE SCHEDULED for organizational purposes:
#1 June 29th Tyson's Corner Holiday Inn, 1960 Chain Bridge Rd (Rt.123) McLean, VA. Sat. Noon.
#2 July 27th. Holiday Inn West, 6401 Baltimore National Pike, US Rt. 40-W. Catonsville Md. 21228.

Meetings will start with lunch and likely continue until 4 or 5 PM. Those attending either meeting will be considered CHAPTER MEMBERS of the CHAPTER. Spread the word and contact "Tex" either via W4TE or twisted pair - 703/556-8469. QTH for mail: 2012 Rockingham St. Mc Lean, Va. 22101. GOOD LUCK TEX...

QTC . . . is the name of the Newsletter published by Editor Bill Willmot for the THOMAS A EDISON CHAPTER. The first issue was mailed in March while No. 2 was just received (late May). It tells us among other things that CHAPTER VII now has 61 members and making good growth. As they say at the tracks ... "The Thomas A. Edison Chapter is off and running" With Bill handling operations, its going to be a winner. (Pete Fernandez sez ... 'check!')

CHAPTER NEWSLETTERS In addition to QTH, we will have to mention the fact Charlie Maass has put out three so far this year. Up CANADA WAY, Bill Filtness has put out two editions of... "THE SWP MAPLE LEAF NEWSLETTER... How about that! We didn't anticipate we would have a MAPLE LEAF in our name but there it is... and a real fine paper it is too. SRI space this issue doesn't allow more Chapter News but in coming "SPARKS" SUPPLEMENTS, you can be sure that the field will be covered

S.W.P. Emblems, Labels, Stationery, Etc.

Many members have requested that the Society furnish "Member" letterheads, envelopes, labels, patches, pins, etc. to identify them with the organization. We think it is good promotional service, hence we are furnishing items listed on this page AT NEAR COST. Calif. state tax has been paid. Postage will have to be added, as indicated.

We think members will find these artifacts of considerable social and fraternal use and will enjoy using them. When ordering, please allow for transit time by 3rd class mail.

As a matter of policy, we wish to reiterate a notice that has been made many times, i.e.: Stationery and other items furnished are not to be used for any commercial purpose including the solicitation of funds for any reason covering political or 'cause' promotion, etc. If you should ever receive such solicitation you will know . . . IT IS NOT AUTHORIZED and we would appreciate being informed without delay.

STATIONERY PRICES

	QUANTITY: 50	100	250	300
Letterheads - 8-1/2 x 11"	1.50	2.50	5.00	---
No. 10 Envelopes	1.50	2.50	5.00	---
Postage extra	.40	.80	1.25	
Combination Pack - 25 of each postpaid - \$2.00				
Noteheads 5-1/2 x 11"	1.00	1.50	3.00	
No. 6 Envelopes	1.25	2.00	5.00	
Postage extra	.32	.72	1.15	
Combination Pack, 25 Env. 50 Noteheads - \$1.25 ppd.				

The above limited for use by members for fraternal or social correspondence only.

GUMMED LABELS



- ① Blue field - white letters
measures 1-3/8"
Octagon shape



- ② Blue field - white letters
Measures 3-3/4 long x 1"



- ③ COLOR - RED FIELD
Size - 1-3/4 inches across

PLEASE SPECIFY TYPE WHEN ORDERING

TYPE	QUANTITY	100	200	500
1.		.80	1.50	3.50
2.		1.00	1.75	4.25
3.		1.25	2.25	5.25
Postage10	.20	.50

Note: Occasionally, the die-cut is not perfect. We mail (random choice). We think you will find most all usable. Printed sizes above are about 65 percent of original size - see actual measurement/s stated for exact sizes. You will find these add prestige to correspondence, QSL cards, etc.



Embroidered Patches

These "PATCH" Emblems measure 4 inches across and are beautifully embroidered on a durable and washable cotton twill background with the finest threads available and in nearly 10 matching colors. They are truly a work of CUSTOM EMBROIDERED ART that you will thrill to wear at HAMFESTS and in fact on any or all occasions when a patch might be used for identification of your association with the Society. Price is \$1.50 each (limited to 2 to a member on orders to Sept. 1974). Mailed ppd. by first-class mail. We thank members, Geo. Mazzali at KLC Galveston Radio (ITT)(K5STR) and Ed. Marriner for putting us in touch with manufacturers. Available July 15th.



Tackett Pins

TACKETT PINS which can be used as a tie-tac or lapel pin w/o damage to fabric is a quality made product that we are proud of. It is made of STERLING SILVER by "Jostons" - perhaps the most outstanding manufacturer of silver jewelry of this kind in the U.S. They are very durable and extremely attractive. Pin size measures 3/8" body and 5/8" across spokes. PRICE (our cost) is \$5.60 each ppd. via insured mail in the US. Airmailed to other countries at same price but we do not guarantee although every precaution taken. If you are not more than 100 percent satisfied, return in mint condx w/case and we'll refund full cost, less mailing expenses. Always a waiting list for them and supply is limited. Should you ever want to sell, let us know and we will arrange disposition.

Irreplaceable Memorabilia Lost Forever

Every year, some of our members become Silent keys due to our age group. Families, not knowing that the pictures and nostalgic records are of any value, throw them out as so much 'junk' or 'trash'. We hope our members will think about it and either arrange to send us books, pictures and all types of memorabilia before too late - or at least leave instructions in their will that we be made the legatee of such material. This is important. The Society will appreciate your thoughtfulness.

The PRE*CAMBRIAN AGE OF RADIO

By (*) A LONG LONG TIME AGO

Herbert E. Scott 838-SGP S.S. PRESIDENT - WGP



H. J. SCOTT

T

here are still a few of us around that took part in, and remember the romantic old days of what was called 'the wireless'. Most of us find ourselves in the 60 to 80 age group. We started in, for the most part, as youngsters of 15 to 17 years of age, and found ourselves suddenly an officer aboard ship, responsible for the communication to and from the vessel!

Those were the days when the 'kid' operator was faced with a deafening spark every time he pressed his key. Sometimes he had an old straight gap, sometimes a non-synchronous rotary gap, sometimes a synchronous rotary gap, and sometimes a quenched gap. Whichever one he had, when the door to the wireless room was closed, he nearly suffocated with ozone!

Then when the station with which he was trying to communicate came back, the shipboard operator by means of a tedious cut-and-try process, with the aid of a buzzer, was hopeful that the point he found on his galena detector was as good as the last one!

Each station, ship or shore, was identifiable by an experienced operator simply from the audio tone of its spark. For instance, when the Marconi station at Eureka, KPM, came on the air at 8:00 p.m. to collect the eight o'clock position reports, he was heard far and wide with his 'dit, da' the dit being in tone and the da being in a basso profundo. He had a non-synchronous rotary that 'hit the cycles' as we used to say. The Marconi station at KPH had a beautiful full toned rotary that was uniquely KPH's and sounded like no one else.

Then there was VAE up on Estevan Point on the central portion of Vancouver Island. This was about the first station one picked up on the way home from the Orient, and also about the first station one picked up coming home from South America. He sounded like a voice from down in the cellar. I am sure he used a 60 cycle synchronous spark gap!

Each ship had its own characteristic tone as well as

the individual 'fist' of its operator. For instance, I remember well the oil tanker the Frank H. Buck, WTO, which I am sure had a 60 cycle straight gap aboard. The President, WGP, and The Governor, WGR, each had non-synchronous rotaries, and an experienced operator could tell them apart with no trouble.

The ships equipped with a 500 cycle quenched spark transmitter, P-8, included many oil tankers, and passenger ships. It seemed that each ship equipped with this transmitter had an operator aboard who had his own idea as to what 500 cycles should sound like.

Probably, the most beautiful sounding spark that Marconi ever put out was the 240 cycle, synchronous rotary gap transmitter. It had a punch that carried the signal over remarkable distances. I recall while I was on the Nome run out of Seattle on the Umatilla, WGU, which was equipped with such a 240 cycle synchronous set that as soon as we left the Bering Sea and headed out into the North Pacific, I frequently talked to NPU at Tutuila, Samoa, some 4000 miles to the south of us with the greatest of clarity. This was in the days of crystal detectors such as galena, silicon, or iron pyrites.

Today's ships have a place designed for the radio equipment and the radio operator when they are built. In the early teens and early twenties, this was NOT the case. It seems, with very few exceptions, that any place too hot to keep the ship's stores in, or too damp to keep the linen in, was all right to put the damned kid wireless operator and his equipment in!

We were not very much liked and were hardly tolerated in those days. Each and every operator had to hew his own way. Many skippers resented the installation of the wireless equipment aboard their ships.

CONTINUED ON
PAGE - - - 16



S.S. PRESIDENT

The S.S. PRESIDENT was a 'near' sister-ship to the S.S. GOVERNOR except she had one stack instead of two. They both sailed for the Pacific Coast Steamship Co. (Admiral Line) between San Francisco and Puget Sound ports, during the 20's and early 30's. The President was later renamed the SS Dorothy Alexander. She was sold in 1946 to Portuguese owners who called her the SS PORTUGAL. She was scrapped in Italy in 1952.

THE SOCIETY OF
WIRELESS PIONEERS

SOS...SOS...SOS...



Those 'Pesky' Dues

SOS...SOS...SOS...



A Sad Story!

The Skipper was returning from the Agents with a sack of lettuce and bolts to pay the crew. Since it was heavy, he ask 'Winchie to hoist it aboard with the sky hook and he'd pick it up on deck.

Things went wrong. Winchie, a dock-walloper from Podunk-- somewhere out there on the prairie, gave it the 'pile-driver touch' and . . . whammo . . . right on the Old Man's mid-section !

It knocked all the EXPLETIVES out of the old Salt! You can bet that when the Skipper comes to, he'll introduce this 'Cherry Picker' to the Patron Saint in charge of the After Bilges.



Shark Bait

Here you see a bunch of 'smart' sharks swimming around in the SWP Ocean which tested 100 proof even though diluted with some swampwater. They are swimming in formation and laying in wait for some of that substance (perhaps they smell the pecuniary odor) that you plan to send the Society to sustain our solvency. The necessary diversionary action is plainly evident. Air Lift it right over their greedy wave-cutting fins. Otherwise - more than your grid leak might be dripping.

'SPARKS'



Here is our happy "Feller" (Jack, Junior) who has no doubt paid up his dues and now enjoys his copy of "SPARKS" on the WATCH BELOW in solid comfort - secure in the knowledge that he has no 'sustaining-dues' problems for at least another year. Nice feeling ! He isn't worried about the skipper or the sharks.

Now ... wouldn't you like to be this kind of a guy ?



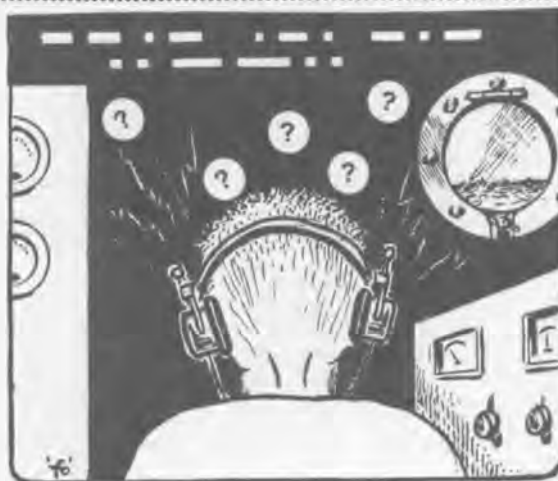
- PLEASE NOTE... IF YOU HAVE PAID YOUR 1974 SUSTAINING DUES... THIS REMINDER IS NOT (REPEAT) NOT FOR YOU ! Just 'QTA' the whole biz and chuck it in file '13' or the round box over by the desk there.
- SERIOUSLY HOWEVER... We have too much to do to have to send several reminders to members about their delinquent dues.

PAY YOUR DUES!

- Secondly, it is something we dislike doing. We think most members who enjoy the Society will

support it by mailing dues when first notified it is due. However annual action and support at time statements are mailed (even when a 'do-it-yourself' variety, helps us schedule the recording of your dues. We realize that occasionally letters do go astray and we know that we do make mistakes in membership records and mailing addresses - perhaps you did not receive your statement form ? If there is any kind of a problem however, give us the opportunity of ironing it out. If you simply forgot...OKAY... just put it in an envelope and mail it in and that will square it all up. BUT, DO IT TODAY !

You will probably agree that the mailing of SWP publications to members who allow dues to lapse is a disservice to those who faithfully send in their dues and sometimes donations right on the dot. For this reason, we feel it necessary to stop mailing of our next issue of SPARKS, POC, etc. As a life member your name will be retained on Society Rosters, Directories, etc. However, if you have not paid... this is your life line... GRAB IT.



USCG "WESTWIND" LEADS RESCUE SHIPS



AID FOR GREENLAND ESKIMO VILLAGE

The above picture is of the U.S. Coast Guard icebreaker WESTWIND (NLKL) on which many SWP USCG member have served. We don't know if a SWP member was aboard in 1964 when this photograph was taken or not. Member 'Gerry' Nuber was assigned to her in 1963 and Jim Crisp Jr. in 1965-66. The USCG WESTWIND is leading the 3,000-ton Danish freighter NANOOK S. through 50 miles of solid packed ice in Melville Bay to deliver supplies to starving Savigssivik Eskimo village on Meteorite Island, Greenland. This was one of the outstanding performances of the WESTWIND's 1964 Arctic trip that earned the ship's Coast Guard commendation.

While making a lone attempt to deliver winter supplies over the 100-mile stretch from Thule to Savigssivik's 65 Eskimos during the worst ice conditions ever remembered in that region, the NANOOK S. became trapped 50 miles from the village. After the ice pressure eased off, the freighter was forced to return to Thule. It was late Sept. 1965 then and the Coast Guard icebreaker WESTWIND was helping ships of the Navy Military Sea Transportation Service complete a cargo sea lift at Thule AFB. The ships were ready to depart when an appeal was received from the Danish Government to save the Eskimos on Savigssivik from facing a bleak winter without food and fuel supplies.

The WESTWIND, with the Navy icebreaker ATKA, safely escorted the NANOOK S. to within 300 yards of the village. Fifteen dog sledges were put to work hauling 50 tons of general cargo and food, 75 tons of bagged coal, and 150 drums of kerosene. Together, Sailors and Eskimos worked rapidly before the NANOOK S. would be frozen in the ice. By dawn the next morning the work was done and three ships worked their way to the open sea.

The 269 foot, 6,515-ton Coast Guard icebreaker WESTWIND, a crew of 186 officers and men on board, under command of Captain Robert F. Barber, USCG of Miami, departed to its homeport at Brooklyn, N.Y. June 9th to carry out the annual resupply mission to Arctic bases and stations in company with a Navy Military Sea Transportation Service Task Force. She returned some six months later on November 10th.

The picture above is an Official U.S. COAST GUARD Photograph and was furnished to us from the collection of late member David L. Drows - 647-P who passed on April 10 1972. "Dave", a real 'buff' of the Coast Guard and the USLHS furnished us for publication quite a story on "LIGHTHOUSES OF THE WORLD". Some of the finest pictures of lighthouses available are in our files waiting publication which is scheduled for the coming issue of PORTS O' CALL in early fall 1974.

From the above... one can infer that the U.S. COAST GUARD means . . . "ADVENTURE" and never a dull assignment.

MEET "JOE" FALBO SOS CQD'ER



Joe, who now hails from the landlocked harbor (?) of Tucson, Arizona where he just finished a long tour with the FAA as one of their top maintenance men and operators, says that one Gerry Travis first told him about SWP. He was surprised to find Bill Breniman at the helm as paths had crossed many times around the U.S.A. Joe FS. was the Lake Type freighter ONEIDA (KEZJ) in 1935. A year later he was assigned the Pgr. Ship SS SEMINOLE (WNCX) as Chief. He recalls shipmate Bill McLaughlin, Frank Mathews, Andy Tocco and Curry Musser serving with him on WNCX during time he was Chief. Joe left the sea in 1940 and joined the (then) CAA. He was assigned 1943-1944 at Natal Brazil for PtP work when the CAA staffed the overseas bridge net to Africa. Many an exciting moment handling aircraft traffic during this assignment. Joe was on the SS ONEIDA when she lost her prop during a 'Northeaster' while outbound from Jacksonville. After floundering around all night in the vicinity of St. John's Light, his SOS was answered and they got a tow back to Jacksonville, and later into drydock at Charleston.

Joe says he wishes he had kept letters from Gerry Travis - a real 'Sinbad--the Sailor' who has been all over the world. They would have made a wonderful story for the Pioneers.

Joe took many pictures of passing ships from the Western Ocean and we are publishing a few of them, thanks to Joe.

Joe sent along pix of stations "WOE" at Palm Beach and "WMR" at Miami which we will try to find space for in this issue. Incidentally, the S.S. Seminole was equipped with a FEDERAL SPARK transmitter back in those days. Joe asks to be remembered to all his old friends.

SHIPS OF THE WESTERN OCEAN



SS IROQUOIS "KGFD"

The SS IROQUOIS/KGFD, 6178 Tons was built in 1927 and operated from the Clyde Lines on the East Coast. She sailed for a brief time as running mate to the SS Yale on the SF/LA/SD run. After a brief tour as a Hospital ship under the name "SOLANCE" she was sold to the Turkish State Lines and renamed SS ANKARA.



SS REX "ICEJ"

The 880' SS REX was built in Genoa in 1933 and won the Blue Riband across the Atlantic in 1938 - the only ship from the Mediterranean run to ever be recognized as a 'Speed-Queen' on the Atlantic



MS BRITANNIA "GDXF"

The MS. BRITANNIA/GDXF was the last Liner to carry the White Star Colors on the Atlantic.



"Angel of the Arctic"

NRB

U.S.C.G.



"CUTTER "BEAR"



STEPHAN PARKANS (171-P) who spent a season as Radio Officer aboard the 'legendary' U.S.C.G Cutter "BEAR" - "NRB" sent us the above picture taken while anchored to 'pan' ice off Point Barrow during her annual cruise to the Arctic in 1921.

The BARKENTINE BEAR was a gallant and staunch ship that survived nearly 90-years of the elements in both the Arctic and the Antarctic. Her first 11 years were spent in sealing off the Coast of Newfoundland and strangely enough, she returned in 1940 to the same service only to be left stranded on a Nova Scotia beach. She was purchased by a Philadelphian who planned to convert her to a museum-restaurant however during her tow from Nova Scotia she sank in a heavy gale about 200 miles from Boston in the month of March 1963.

The Cutter BEAR figured in some dramatic rescues and her fame spread throughout the world. Among other 'saves' logged was that of the rescue of survivors of the LADY FRANKLIN near Cape Sabine in 1881. In 1884 she rescued 7 members of the GREELEY EXPEDITION for which a \$25,000 reward had been posted. In 1921 she went to the rescue of Amundsen's disabled ship MAUDE off the Siberian Coast. In 1897-98 she rescued nearly 300 whalers trapped off the mouth of the Yukon River in an early freeze which gripped their five ships.

Her early expeditions to Northern Greenland allowed the U.S.A. to claim the country but in negotiations with Denmark, a trade was arranged which swapped this country for the Virgin Islands.

The CUTTER BEAR made 45 voyages to the Arctic during a 40-year period. During a portion of this time she was under the command of Captain Cocheran who later was shipmates with "YE ED" on the Tanker MISKIANZIE (KOCM) circa 1919. Many were the 'tales' of the Arctic related by the Skipper during these

adventurous days in the Northern Seas.

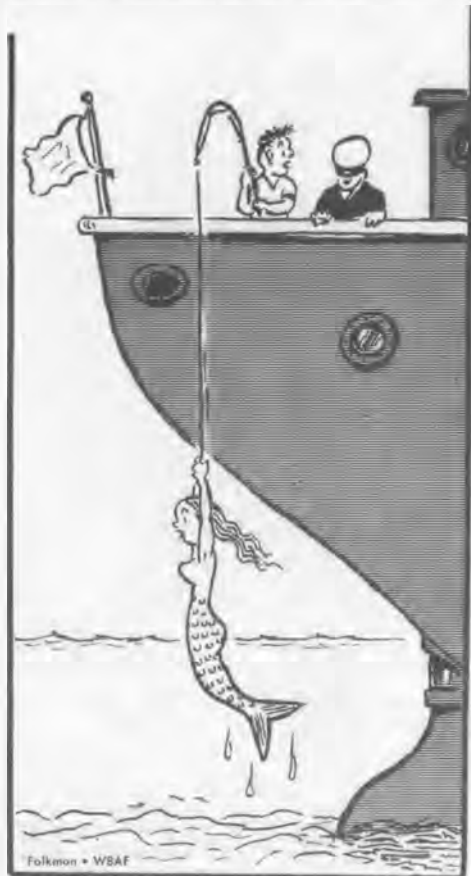
The Bear was relieved by the Cutter NORTHLAND in 1927 and she became the property of the City of Oakland, Calif. with plans to make her a maritime museum. However no action was taken so in 1932 when Admiral Byrd wanted a sturdy ship for his Antarctic adventure, he was able to procure the (renamed) BEAR OF OAKLAND for his expedition.

It so happened that SWP Member AMORY H. "Bud" WAITE, Jr., (411-P) signed on the Bear as Radio Officer and made the trip to Boston on her in 1932 where she was refitted. She left Boston in Sept. of 1933 on the expedition to the South Pole that was to bring fame to the Admiral and his staff. "Bud" made the voyage to the Antarctic with Byrd and was radioman for the Admiral from 1934 to 1935 during which time he operated KFY and KFZ at LITTLE AMERICA - the world's southernmost stations until 1956. The ships ALERT and THETIS were part of the trio of ships that accompanied the expedition southward to the Antarctic.

The history and adventure of the CUTTER BEAR would fill many books. Indeed one has already been written, titled . . . "THE SEA OF THE BEAR". We have not read it yet but Member Hal Craig is getting a copy for the Society's library. We want to take this occasion to thank Hal for his interest and service. Of course our thanks to STEVE PARKANS for his first-hand account of assignment on the CUTTER BEAR with picture above, and also to Member "Bud" Waite for the background information of more recent years.

Indeed the CUTTER BEAR is 'steeped' in history of the sea, and especially the Northern and Southern Oceans. Many of the Society's members have also made the CUTTER BEAR their HOME over the years so she is of special interest to our members.

'You shudda seen the one that got away!'



Folkman • WSAF

THE SOCIETY OF
WIRELESS PIONEERS

Invitation. . .

to join the FCC*

Fooled you with this abbreviation didn't we ? (*) The F.C.C. stands for . . . "FOLKMAN'S CARTOON CONTEST !

When "FO" drew this cartoon he found the dialogue versions many and varied. Every time he thought he had the right wording for a CAPTION, another one came to mind. Here are a few of them:

- "Do I have to throw it back, Captain ? The radio gang has been looking for an exotic pet."
- "It won't be a problem to weigh her - She's got her own scales."
- "Guess a few drops of my HAI KARATE got on the bait."
- "I was trolling off the stern, Sir. You'll never guess what"

This 'inspired' the idea that members might enjoy a contest in which they could submit their own captions. No prizes understand, however, on second thought, we might award the winner with a liter of 'Leyden Jar Juice' or if you prefer two liters of OZONE.

Send "FO" your entry. At the same time, if you have any sharp ideas for cartoons, why not send them along - perhaps some day you might just see them in SPARKS. FO's Address: 4338 West 137th St. Cleveland, Ohio, 44135.

Little "Red"

a SWP CHAPTER in the Nations Capitol. We think every issue should have ONE Non-Radio Story. We thought this was a little 'gem'.

I'm sure you have heard the story of Little Red Riding Hood, as she planned a trip to her grandmother's house and her conversation was overheard by a wolf. By taking a shortcut through the strawberry patch, the wolf arrived at the grandmother's house and had sufficient time to devour the grandmother and put on her nightgown and get into bed. When Red Riding Hood arrived, the wolf made advances toward her and she ran screaming from the house into the woods. A woodsman nearby heard her cries for help and came to her aid. In one swing of his axe he slew the wolf. The townspeople proclaimed the woodsman a hero.

However, at the inquest the following day, the County Coroner determined that the wolf had not been properly advised of his rights and, in addition, had never been given the opportunity to surrender. The verdict of the County Coroner was to hold the woodsman over for trial.

The prosecutor opened the trial by stating that the wolf was not guilty of murder as he was merely doing his thing as he devoured the grandmother as

this was his natural instinct. Several witnesses were called to confirm this as a fact. It was also proved that the wolf was only trying to make love, not war, with Little Red Riding Hood and this is not a crime in the County of Woods.

Under examination by the prosecutor, Miss Hood had to admit that the wolf seemed as much interested in her basket of goodies as he was in her as a person. She also admitted that her Red Riding Habit had a mini skirt, thereby possibly enticing the wolf unduly. At this point in the trial the prosecutor entered a formal charge against Miss Hood.

After deliberation of some two hours, the jury found the woodsman to be guilty of aggravated assault with intent to kill and he was sentenced to 20 years to life.

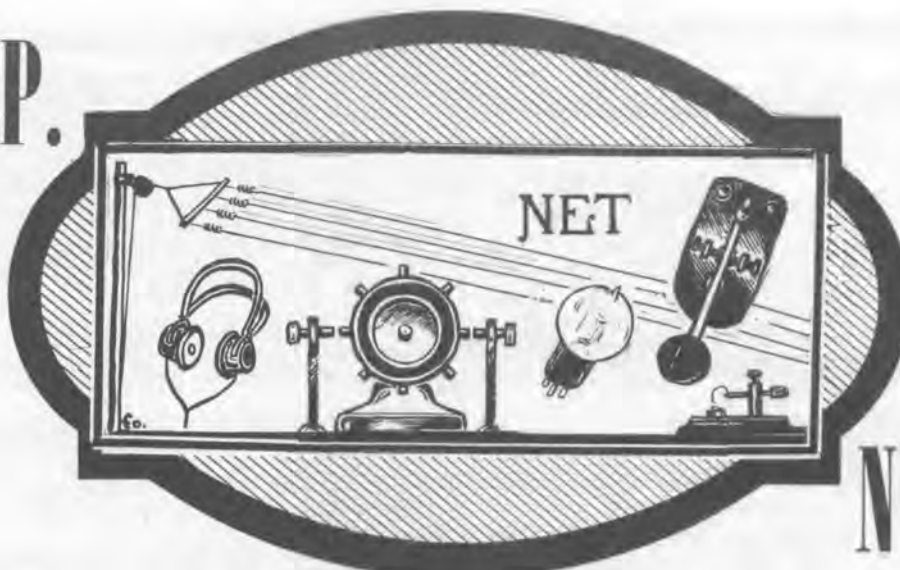
Miss Hood was convicted of lewd conduct, inciting to riot, and was given the maximum sentence the law would allow.

Possibly charges against the deceased wolf of murder, trespassing and female impersonation were dropped as it was pointed out that he had more than paid for these minor infractions with his life.

Pennies were collected from the local school children to erect a magnificent statue to the wolf in the town square as a reminder to all that justice will prevail.

—from the Doug Llewlyn Program on WTOP

S.O.W.P.



NEWS

S.O.W.P. NET SCHEDULES

C.W. SCHEDULES

NET	DAY	TIME	FCY/kHz
1. N.E. ATLANTIC "YANKEE NET" W2ZI (Ed) W3FYD (Jack)	MON	9AM LCL	3670
2. S.E. ATLANTIC/FLORIDA "EDISON" NET" W4BVE (Alan Hinshelwood) New schedules will be established. Write for if			
3. WESTERN CANADA "WESCAN NET" VE7WZ (*May change to 7055 +/- 5 kHz a/c daylight.	MON	7PM	3555*
4. PACIFIC COAST NET "PACIFIC" W6BNB (Bob) Note: Not active June 13 to Sept. 19th.	THURS	7PM	3555
5. TRANS-CONTINENTAL "TRANSCON" W6BNB (Off during Summer) ALTERNATES: W8BKM (Gross) also "Hox" Repeats: THURS 1600Z 14125 & W5WD (A.H.Hart) Dual - - 7055	THURS	1500Z	14125
6. MID-ATLANTIC "EASTERN" W1DU (Bus); W3FG (Herb) Alternate.	SAT.	1500Z	7100
7. PACIFIC N.W. "JACK BLINNS" W7TU - Tom (Thos. A. Jobs C/O	TUE.	7PM PST	3555

PHONE NETS.....

SWP HAPPY HOUR W6PZY - "Charlie"	DAILY	5PM PDT	3945
GOLDEN GATE W6OFL - "Holgy"	MON-THU-FRI	10AM PST	3930
ELMO PICKERILL "PICK" NET - W2RTV (Charlie) W2LEL, W2VDE ALT.	DAILY	7PM LCL	3670
WESTCAN SSB NET VE7WZ - Bill Fitness.	WEEKDAYS	9AM	3740

CHIEF OPERATOR - S.O.A.P. NETS

Robert L. Shrader - W6BNB
11911 Barnett Valley Road
Sebastopol, Calif. 95472

PLEASE KEEP US POSTED ON ANY CHANGES IN SCHEDULES INCLUDING NET CONTROL, ETC. SO WE CAN PUBLISH IN "SPARKS" SUPPLEMENTS, T.U.

THE SOCIETY OF
WIRELESS PIONEERS

Summer Vacation for "TRANSCON"

Our Chief Operator, W6BNB, Bob Shrader has faithfully manned the TRANSCON NET, weekly since last September and as vacation time rolls around and sigs get down in the mud, it is a good time to take a little time out, which he so richly deserves. Hence Bob, with his fine sigs will be off the air starting June 13th (last Skj. June 6th) until Sept. 19th when he will be back... God willing.

We will however continue to mail abbreviated NETBUL information for all those listed, weekly as condx. permit. New Members, Silent Keys, Coming Events, Etc.

S.W.P. "NETBUL" MAILING

Since we plan to publish supplements to "SPARKS" on at least a monthly basis, the information and coverage included in former net bulletins will be discontinued. Only short basic NRI form information XEROXed will be sent Chapter Officers and C/O. These can be routed to various officials within the Chapters.

"SOLID COPY" AWARD

Sharp Idea from our Chief Operator - Bob W6BNB. We will print up some attractive certificates which will certify that you have copied . . . error free . . . a full transmission of one of our full net bulletins. Members w/o Xmtrs (R-only) are also eligible. Just mail in copy to Bob who will check and if you qualify one of these certificates will be mailed to you.

ITU PUBLICATIONS

A number of members have inquired as to where they might procure ITU publications in the U.S. Member John D. Allen, W1DMD informs us that you can buy from: GILFER ASSOCIATES, INC., P.O. Box 259, Park Ridge, N.J. 07656. (Ask for ITU list as they have many others). Reports good service on his orders.

As we close this page, we would like to honor our first President, Richard "Dick" Johnstone who established the SOWP NET back on Oct. 9th 1968 when he went on the air for the first time calling... "CQ DE SOWP from his station W6FQ. Hard to realize..6 Years ago. Tempus Fugit.

Bill Breniman - Ex "6BE"



U.S. UNITED STATES
-the world's "fastest" ship

"Herb" Scott's Nostalgic Recollections



(Continued from Page 11)

They seemed to feel that the wireless was a reflection of their abilities as captains of their vessels!

I recall so well a particular oil tanker which was my home from April 20, 1916 until June 13, 1917 - the Capt. A. F. Lucas, WTV. Many an old timer will remember her. The radio room was a wheelhouse on the fantail directly over the rudder steering engine and the wheel. It was a nice big, airy room in which to live but a most abominable radio room. The continual vibration was something akin to an earthquake of about 6 on the Richter Scale!! I had a Moorehead audion detector of my own, a so-called 'pickle tube'. This I had to tenderly lay in a cigar box full of absorbent cotton to prevent the plate and grid from bumping together as a result of the severe vibration.

Each and every morning, a ritual was performed. Every nut and bolt on the P-8 transmitter frame was gone over with a screwdriver and wrench to tighten them up. Should this be neglected, first one part and then another would drop off! When we towed Barge 93 or Barge 95 the towing engine, which was right under the wireless room produced its own additional noise and vibration.

After about two days out on the way to the Hawaiian Islands on this tanker, I had to carry the Marconi 103 receiver down into the mess room in order to be able to copy press from KPH.

Everything certainly did not come up smelling of roses in those days. One thing we were never allowed to forget was that in the eyes of the skipper we were an unwanted and necessary evil aboard his ship and we were frequently told so in no uncertain terms.

The first job I ever had with Marconi was on a Columbia River Bar Tug, the Oneonta, WPX, in 1914. It was horribly infested with bed bugs, and I shared the room with the First Mate and the wireless equipment. The transmitter had a straight gap which had once been equipped with a concrete muffler but was no longer. Each time I started up, not only did the rotary converter make noise but each dot on the spark gap sounded like a 12-gauge shot gun blast. The Mate on his watch below when asleep naturally became most irate when I started up! He threatened to beat me up on several occasions.

At this time we were paid 30 dollars a month plus room and board. After a year we were promised 33 dollars a month, and after some additional years we would reach the grand maximum of 35 dollars a month! By 1916 the going wage was 50 dollars a month except on oil tankers which always paid over scale - 55 dollars a month. This is why tankers were popular and in demand. By the time I signed off the Lurline, WML, in September of 1923 and swallowed the anchor, the pay of a chief operator was 150 dollars a month.

Today, operators frequently earn more in a month than we used to dream of making in a year! And, additionally, you are now far more respected by your shipmates than we old timers ever were.

Prior to the time of unions, life on shipboard was much more rough and rugged than it is today. The skipper could do all kinds of things to a member of the crew for some minor infraction of his rules, real or fancied. Today, he would certainly not be able to get away with this!

For instance, one trip on the S.S. Umatilla (WGU) on the Seattle - Nome - Seattle run I witnessed a most cruel and uncouth action by the skipper.

We were on our way from Nome to Seattle, and were still in the Bering Sea. On deck, it was cold and windy. It was about 10 or 11 PM when the skipper had a member of the 'black gang' brought up to the top deck, adjacent to the radio room.

This fellow had had an argument of sorts with the 3rd engineer who reported him to the skipper. The result, he was brought up to the top deck and handcuffed to a stack stay just outside the radio room.

As I mentioned, it was C O L D up on the top deck and the fellow had just come up from the boiler room where he had been perspiring heavily and had little in the way of clothes on; a thin shirt, a pair of pants, and slippers.

Why the man never got pneumonia I will never know for he soon shivered so hard he had to sit on the deck!

This skipper was the same guy who took two slats out of the radio shack venetian blinds so he could sneak around at night and see whether or not Sparks was asleep on watch or awake.

It has been my thought throughout here that some of you more recent radio operators might be interested in the way things were in the early days of wireless. And as a point of information from an old timer who lived through this era having put up his first Ham station in 1912, he now finds himself at 76 years of age still interested in CW radio, but no longer interested in going to sea except perhaps as a passenger!

HERBERT J. SCOTT - 838-SGP

We should call "Herb" . . . "PROFESSOR" SCOTT by virtue of some 30-years teaching experience at the University of California at Berkeley. His courses included Radio Engineering, Electronics, Electromagnetic Radiation and Propagation. He had charge of the Communications Laboratory. Prior to retirement in 1964 he had been Dean for some eight years. Upon retirement he became a Professor Emeritus. He still has his office at the University.

We might also call him "COMMANDER" SCOTT as he did a hitch in the USNR and retired from it.

Herb says that the TITANIC disaster in 1912 sparked his interest and imagination so that 'started' a career that has lasted a life-time. His first assignment was to the Tug ONEONTA/WPX in 1914. Then followed many other ships and trips over the world.

The last ship Herb was assigned was the S.S. LURLINE WML of the Matson Line. He sent an SOS from her on Feb. 28 1923 when she grounded in a dense fog in Puget Sound at Bush Point, Whidby Island at 3.25 AM. She was later pulled off without damage and proceeded on her 'triangle run' from Seattle - S.F. - Honolulu to Seattle. Herb has many more stories for coming issues which we look forward to with great interest.

W.A.B.



BOOKS

SALTWATER BOOKSHELF

THE LOOKOUT

published by the SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE of NEW YORK is small in size but rewarding in its contents. For example: The March issue told about Billy B. Waldeck, radio operator on the Tanker S.S. NATALIE O. WARREN sighting a UFO. The May 1974 issue tells where you can secure 'Nautical Certificates' for 8 ceremonial occasions, like crossing the 180 Meridian, Equator, Arctic Circle, etc. Many interesting articles about the sea in both days of steam and sail. Subscription costs \$5 per year (\$1 more for Canada & foreign). The programs of the Institute are well known and merit your consideration. Address: 15 State Street, New York, NY. 10004

"SHIPS" MONTHLY ... An old nautical publication has recently been taken over by IPC Transport Press Limited. Those who have subscribed to SHIPS previously will find the new format and size of great interest. SHIP BUFFS, to our knowledge will find nothing like it in America. The MAY 1974 issue will carry an article commemorating the centenary of Marconi's birth. Should you wish to subscribe they will furnish a copy of this issue with compliments (or one additional copy on a year's subscription which runs \$12.40 ppd. U.K. Subscription rate is 4.75 per annum. ADDRESS subscriptions to: SHIPS MONTHLY, IPC Business Press Ltd. Oakfield House, Perrymount Road, Baywards Heath, Sussex RH 16 3DH.

THE MARINERS CATALOG ... It is not really a catalogue, per se but a book of information for those concerned with boats and the sea. Published by INTERNATIONAL MARINE Publishing Co 21 Elm Street, Camden, Maine 04843, it is one of many books you might like to add to your collection. The cost of the Mariners Catalog is \$4.95

FRANK BRANARD'S "LEVIATHAN" STORY

This is a monumental work by our good friend Frank Braynard who has allowed us to use some of his fine articles in past issues of PORTS O' CALL, etc.

Many SWP members have sailed the "LEVI" when she was perhaps the most sought after assignment on the North Atlantic when her call was WSN and later WSHN. The Chief, Elmo Pickerill was a legendary name in the hal of operational history and our Chapter XI under the stewardship of Charles Maass who also sailed on the S.S. LEVIATHAN and his associates have named their chapter in his honor. It not only has the ear-marks of an epic publication but we are sure it will become a 'Collector's Item' in the years ahead.

Copies may be purchased from Frank, whose address is: 98 DuBois Avenue, Sea Cliff, N.Y. 11597. I am sure he would gladly autograph a copy if you wish. The tab is \$20.00, which if you are acquainted with today prices very reasonable. It might be noted in passing that Frank has offered to furnish us with some more 'nautical goodies' for publication in the future. He is perhaps one of the top authors and authorities on shipping alive today.



"VINTAGE RADIO"

Second Edition - 1973

S. GERNSBACK'S RADIO
ENCYCLOPEDIA - 1927
Republished 1974

The two above publications
are the work of Society
Member . . .

MORGAN E. McMAHON

TA-26

We think that member Morgan McMahon has done all those interested in the early days of wireless and radio as well as those who currently earn their living in the electronic arts a great service in making these old publications available again.

VINTAGE RADIO is the standard reference for the fast growing legion of wireless and radio collectors, and for historians. This book will cost you \$4.95 in handbook style or \$6.95 for hard cover binding.

SYDNEY GERNSBACK'S RADIO ENCYCLOPEDIA is a 'classic' and perhaps the best book ever published in the field. It is the opinion of Ye Ed. that any one seriously interested in equipment and operation of the by-gone days will find this book a 'must' for his library. While published some 47-year ago, it still has not been surpassed. It tells about the people, technology and hardware of those days in infinite detail. This book is priced at \$9.95 in Handbook style or \$12.95 Hardcover. Send your order to Morgan E. McMahon, VINTAGE RADIO, Box 2045, Palos Verdes Pnsia, Calif. 90274. Add tax for California delivery. I am sure Morgan will autograph your copy if you ask.

Errata & Corrections



PLEASE EXCUSE THIS ERROR:

Into everyone's life, a little rain must fall.

Years ago when I toyed with the idea of going to Columbia for a class in journalism, I received a telegram which read . . . "THE ANSWER IS NO!"

They must have sensed my intent because I had not even written them. Funny how these little things change one's life mode.

Following are a few errors noted. On Page 25 - Title page for "HISTORICAL PAPERS" by Thorn L. Mayes, please correct spelling of TransAtlantic in next to bottom line. Thorn didn't send it in that way. I did it with my own little type-stick.

PAGE - 57. "HEYDAY" Story by Lester Backman. Name of PANAM's Chief Pilot was Ed Musick instead of Ed. Busby. Les was on the U.S.S. Monocacy sailing from Shanghai to Chanking, some 1900 miles on Yangtze River Patrol Duty. He did run into Tsingtao and Chefoo on one of the WW-1 "Tin Cans".

Les says that he was on duty at the CAA Station at Nantucket when the Andrea Doria and Stockholm collided. The radio DF secured by Ye Ed saved the days for pilots flying over the wreck - some 135 of them would have never made it without this DF, years later we learn of these things! That must have been a 'scoop' of some kind for Ye Ed - and he didn't even know it!



Officers & Directors Reply

Treasurer's Report

Directors Delineate Society Objectives

The Society deeply appreciates the financial legacy bestowed upon us by our late member, Rudolph A.P. "Rudy" Asplund (87-P) and which was mentioned in much detail on Page 15 of "SPARKS" first issue.

Following is a summary of the recommendations made by officers and directors of SWP answering an Executive letter/Questionnaire (Sept. 24, 1973) which solicited their recommendations and guidelines in establishing future plans and projects.

RECOMMENDED

1. PUBLICATIONS

Increase the frequency of Society releases, accenting Research and Historical Papers plus narratives of the experiences of members which relate to the early days of wireless, its use and development. These to include the Manuscripts and material donated the Society* through its Director who was named proxy for its use.

The current format of "SPARKS" seems ideal for the purpose. The publication will become "THE BOOK OF THE WIRELESS PIONEERS" with SPARKS as sub-title. The Newsletter for the Society will be issued as a SPARKS SUPPLEMENT. (It may be issued separately and at more frequent intervals, which is also recommended).

(*) Henry Dickow

2. LIBRARY

Considered very important in preserving the history of the profession for posterity. They will be used for reference and may be loaned libraries, colleges or members under certain conditions and restrictions. (Members may participate in furnishing their books, pictures or memorabilia to enhance its value, for stated purpose.

3. AWARDS

(TO BE HANDLED BY AWARDS COMMITTEE)

(A) MERITORIOUS

To be issued for outstanding achievement/s by those in our profession. These to be in certificate form.

(B) MEDAL OR CERTIFICATE OF VALOR

The award to be called... "The ASPLUND medal or certificate" to be awarded for outstanding acts of heroism or valor. Events pre-dating 1974 not eligible.

(C) SOS/CQD CLUB CERTIFICATES

To be awarded members and others in the profession who have been called upon in time of extreme emergency to send(or have sent) the CQD, SOS or other emergency signals, calling for help. Documentation required to justify.

VETOED OR NEGATIVE REACTION

- (1) HALL OF FAME - Believed to be too controversial.
- (2) MUSEUM - No. Too Costly. (Suggest that we 'loan' SWP artifacts available to various museums. It is recognized that material of antique or historical nature might be used often to advantage in SWP exhibits or displays. Recommend members contribute artifacts and memorabilia to our museum collection for such use.
- (3) SCHOLARSHIPS No. Too costly and controversial.
- (4) CHARITABLE PROGRAMS - No. (5) SPONSORSHIP OF COMPETITIVE EVENTS No. This included "Championship Code Speed Tests" et cetera.

The Directors strongly recommend the hiring of a "Girl Friday" or Secretarial assistance and all help necessary to prepare, process and mail SWP publications.

SUMMARY OF RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURES FOR YEAR 1973

RECEIPTS:

Initiation fees, dues, emblems, etc. during calendar year 1973...	9,053.40
Legatee of Asplund Estate	20,000.00
Interest of Savings Account	199.79
Total Receipt, 1973	29,253.19
On hand, Dec. 31, 1972	1,745.85
Total	30,999.04

EXPENDITURES: (as itemized)

A. Printing (Gen.)	646.71
B. Postage	871.28
C. Publication Costs	4,493.46
D. Office Supplies	428.18
E. Technical & Reference	119.04
F. Shipping & Drayage	109.86
G. Bank Charges & Fees	
H. Meeting Expenses	91.12
J. Work Contracts	80.50
K. Incidental Help	70.00
L. Misc. Adm. Expenses	.80
M. Misc. Not Covered	18.81
N. Transfer Funds	4.00
P. Equipment	87.91
Q. Emblems & Pins	105.00
R. Member Sta./Labels	18.35
S. Certificates/Awards	176.48
T. Remembrance Cards etc.	3.38
U. Utilities	
V. PR. & Promotional	220.52
W. Chapter Expenses Paid	45.70
X. Rent	832.10
Y. Membership Refunds	
Z. Telephone/Telegrams	1.65
Total Expenditures	8,424.85
ON HAND Dec. 31, 1973	22,574.19

This is to certify that I have checked all records of the Society of Wireless Pioneers for the calendar year 1973. I find this to be a true and correct copy of fiscal records as furnished me.

s/Lorin G. DeMerritt
Treasurer.

Note:

Officers of the Society handling funds are bonded to \$20,000 each to 2/12/75. Fidelity Bond by General Insurance Co. Policy FID-7811.

Should any member wish to personally review the fiscal records of the Society, Treasurer De Merritt will be glad to go over them with such member. Time and place to be arranged by contacting the Treasurer.

The Society is registered with both the I.R.S. and State of Calif., as a non-profit organization. All services and work by Officers & Directors is donated and no pay accepted for same.

Society expenditures budgeted primarily for publication of Historical Papers relating to the early days of wireless and radio, including the nostalgic accounts of the early day pioneers, plus preserving all memorabilia, as possible, for posterity.

Welcome Aboard!

NEW SWP MEMBERS - WE WELCOME YOU

Serial	Name of Member	Handle/Wife	Phone	Call	Address	City	State	Zip
1348-PA 1349-PA 1350-V	McKEE, JOHN M. HENNING, ROY C. ALEXANDER, Eugene	John Susie Roy Ruth Gene --	515/933-4498 415/315-5624 714/657-4476	WB0CFY W6CBN W6GFM	247 So. Mills St. Box 85 3700 Kingridge Drive 27225 Peach Street	Fremont SAN Mateo Perris	IA CA CA	52561 94403 92370
1351-PA 1352-PA 1353-PA 1354-PA 1355-PA	McAULEY, Ronald Ian STOCKING, Otis W. Jr. McBAY BARGFELD, Fred G. ROBICHAUD, Joseph A.	Ian Catharine "Socks" Barbara Dave Jean FB -- Joe Helen	514/658-8905 404/622-6571 506/696-1792 503/276-6281 703/494-5526	VE2DTB K4IEZ VE1AHP W7VJ W4ADM	3055 Chemin du Portage, 2644 Crestdale Cir., S.E. 16 Fowler Dr., St. John, 405 S. E. 19th St., 2212 Montgomery Ave.	Carigan, P.O. Atlanta St. John, N.B. Pendleton Woodbridge	J3L 2B8 GA CANADA OR VA	268 Canada 30316 CANADA 97801 22191
1356-PA 1357-V 1358-PA 1359-V 1360-V	NAUGLE, John B. Jr. FRITH, John M. PITZER, John F. REED, Frederick R. DOBBS, Merrill G.	Jay Jeep JF Corrine John -- Fred Ferne Mel --	415/948-7359 201/235-6436 415/986-9870 813/494-4474 NF	W6VER W2LPL K6VE K4MNJ W5JHK	730 Greenview Place Haytown Road 917 Folsom Str. Apt. 420 R-1, Box 175 527 Dorset Drive	Los Altos Lebanon San Francisco Arcadia Slidell	CA NJ CA FL LA	94022 08833 94107 33821 70458
1361-V 1362-P 1363-V 1364-P 1365-V	EVANS, Dr. James L. Jr. HILL, George N. ADAMS, James T. SMYTH, H. Ross KEYS, William E.	"Doc" Ellie GE -- Jim Anne Ross Irene Bill --	201/569-0889 602/587-0551 605/624-4052 613/692-4710 714/984-3042	W2BBK None WB0CDP VE3FI W60QJ	79 Glenwood Road 159 Sherwood Ave., 535 West Cedar 38 Long Island Rd. Box 578 501 East "E" St.,	Englewood Trenton Vermillion Manotick, Ont. Ontario	NJ NJ SD KOA CA	07631 08619 57069 2N0 Cda. S1761
1366-P 1367-PA 1368-V 1369-V 1370-PA	CLARK, Charles C. Charlie ROBINSON, Reuben, Jr. Pate WRIGHT, Kenneth J. Ken BOWERS, Ray L. LATIMER, William C.	Marian Betty Agatha Ray May Bill --	512/926-6613 215/P1-3-4793 504/367-4510 707/542-4085 404/424-0610	W5QE K3SSQ -- WA6JNY WA4DDH	7111 Geneva Circle Carl Meckley Apts #465, M 4 Derbes Drive 2317 Gardner Avenue P.O. Box 994	Austin M & Bristol, Phila. Gretna Santa Rosa Marietta	TX PA LA CA GA	78723 19124 70053 95401 30061
1371-PA 1372-PA 1373-PA 1374-V 1375-V	DOWDS, John P. FERGUSON, Percy J. GOATCHER, Carl L. IRVINE, Raymond A. BARNETTE, Allen F.	John June Fergy Joyce Carl Norma Ray Wdwr. Allen Helen	405/765-0927 21021 816/279-4832 415/851-1691 714/679-5288	W5ZDQ VK4FM W0HRL W6UJH W6BZA	12311-B Indian Creek Blvd, 7 Hawthorne St. Dalby, 3606 Seneca St. 246 Las Trancas 31-500 Briggs Rd. (Romoland Sta)	Oklahoma City DALBY, QLD. St. Joseph Manito Park Sun City	OK AUSTRALIA Mo CA CA	73120 4405 64507 94025 92380
1376-PA 1377-PA 1378-V 1379-PA 1380-V	NICHOLAS, Frank W. STRYKER, Harry J. STEIN, Harry B. SCHUTHE, George M. McINNES, Kenneth D.	Frank Betsy Harry Eva Harry Sylvia Geo. Dorothy Ken Vera	301/277-6762 201/256-4518 215/887-5052 613/728-8828 22050 (Thonet)	W3GQM -- W3CL VE3DMC G3FTE	5201 Roanoke Avenue 79 Bradford Ave. 2087 Parkdale Ave. 235 Daniel Ave. OTTAWA, 42 Clarence Ave., Cliftonville	Riverdale Little Falls Glenside OTTAWA, Ont. Margate, KENT, ENGLAND	MD NJ PA CANADA	20840 07424 19038 K1Y 0C7 KENT, ENGLAND
1381-PA 1382-PA 1383-P 1384-PA 1385-V	SCOTT, Clement H. GROFINO, Michael J. TOPHAM, Harold W. DONCHE, Andrew D. POND, William B.	Clem Marjorie Mike Emily Hal Claire Andy Ann Bill Margaret	813223 516/BA3-7168 315/686-4141 201/827-3159 415/276-3850	VK4DW W2KC W2GYT -- W5AR	24-A Salisbury Road, Ipswich, QLD. 2 Brookside Drive Route # 1 21 Highland Ave. 872 Grant Ave.	QLD. 4305, AUSTRALIA Baldwin Clayton Ddensburg San Lorenzo	NY NY NJ CA	11510 13624 07439 94580
1386-PA 1387-PA 1388-PA 1389-PA 1390-PA	CAUSEY, Samuel J. BROOKS, Raymond T. QUINLAN, Lawrence A. STOLFEN, Frank NICHOLS, Robert E.	Samuel Ariene Ray -- Larry Dorothy Frank Betty Nick --	205/871-9459 609/641-5579 201/947-0697 212/998-2743 305/296-2525	-- K2LTX W2NAO W2HZQ --	Route 1, Box 650 RD-2, Box 411-C 111 Christie Street 2050 East 19th Street U.S. Coast Guard Group	Birmingham Absecon Leonia Brooklyn Key West	AL NJ NJ NY FL	35211 08201 07605 11229 33040
1391-PA 1392-PA 1393-V 1394-V 1395-PA	FLINT, RICHARD E. BOND, David S. STURDY, Olof T. GITHENS, Sherwood, Jr. SAMSON, Elmer A.	Dick Coral Dave Marjle Tom June Elizabeth Sam Virginia	415/669-1147 916/422-8067 906/265-9725 919/489-3978 303/935-0157	K6JQQ WB6YBT WB8ANY W4EQX W0RZS	P.O. Box 492 7257 Stockdale Street RR-3, Box 224-A 4427 Chapel Hill Road 2035 South Meade St.	Investment Sacramento Iron River Durham Denver	CA CA MI NC CO	94937 95822 49935 27707 80219
1396-P 1397-PA 1398-PA 1399-PA 1400-P	McRAE, Malcolm W. LANE, Charles HELMS, Eiland E. HARWOOD, Clarke R. ZAFFI, Albert H.	Mac Edith Charlie Claire Lan Christine Russ Joyce Albert Margaret	312/823-8930 412/785-3132 904/578-1900 504/262-3283 201/350-5590	W9RC W3UUP W4WNY -- --	816 So. Fairview Avenue 150 Main Street Rt. 1, Box 327 P.O. Box 30416 17-B Columbus Blvd.	Park Ridge Brownsville Niceville New Orleans Whiting	IL PA FL LA NJ	60068 15417 32578 70190 08759
1401-PA 1402-V 1403-V 1404-PA 1405-PA	LABRY, Eucharist J. LAIRD, Darrel E. AMIRALTY, Donald F. PEARCE, Charles R. SPRAGUE, John L. III	Chris -- Darrel Ruby Don -- Chuck Jan Jack Louise	713/735-4546 515/276-6421 -- 604 via Radiophone 504/527-6293 (B)	W5QIB W0HA K1APE VE7AFW --	P.O. Box 28 3419 - 49th Street 56 Labonte Rd. RR-1, Box 185A Bull Harbor Radio, Box 7000, 225-E Wright Avenue	Bridge City Des Moines New Thompson Pt. Hardy, BC. Gretna	TX IA CT VON LA	77611 50310 06277 2P0 Can 70053
1406-V 1407-PA	BRASWELL, Kindred P. MESSINEO, C. Arthur	Bras Lois Art Estelle	214/886-3347 417/284-3504	-- W0NSA	Box 33, Holiday Village Cloud 9, Smoky Road	Commerce Tecumseh	TX MO	75428 65760

(Continued on next page)



The Professionals

"Lots get together" SOCIETY

Welcome These New Members

SERIAL	Name of Member	Handle/Wife	Phone	Ham Call	Address	City	State Zip
CONTINUED FROM PAGE- 21.							
1408-PA 1409-PA 1410-P	ISSOKSON, Samuel B. SMITH, Milton C. ROACH, Isaac	Sam Joyce Milt Gladys Ike Edith	617/693-0706 --- 305/567-6717	W1MMI W6GMC K4QM	Davis Street 328 Harsin Lane 800 Date Palm Road	Vineyard Haven Santa Maria Vero Beach	02568 Mass CA 93454 FL 32960
1411-P 1412-PA 1413-V 1414-V 1415-V	BLACKBURN, Louis J. KRAUSE, Charles P. SCHMIDT, Paul L. OLSON, Oscar J. GILSON, Charles W.	Lou Lenore Charlie -- Paul Karlene Jerry Marge Gil Helen	714/724-7273 -- 812/384-3229 707/539-1394 509/535-5210	WA6TT -- W9UDO -- K7PWK	778 Bonita Drive 890 Robinhood Drive PO Box 105(214 N, Washn) 418 Meadowgreen Dr. (Oakmont) 3928 East Congress Ave.	Vista Reno Bloomfield Santa Rosa Spokane	CA 92083 Nev. 89502 IN 47424 CA 95405 WA 99203
1416-V 1417-PA 1418-PA 1419-PA 1420-P	POTEET, Eugene A. HAMMONS, Edgar G. FRANSON, Arthur W. SILVA, Vince W. GLOVER, Carl R.	Gene Frances Ed Jerry Art -- Vince Joyce "PB" --	314/863-6687 617/945-9293 604/974-5517 604/974-5775 --	W0KR -- VE7AWS VE7DBC K4BIO	7440 Somerset P.O. Box 333 POBox 92, ALERT BAY, POBox 23, ALERT BAY, 40-C Dale Dr. (Holiday Mobile Pk)	Clayton North Chatham B.C. V0N 1A0 B.C. V0N 1A0 Tavares	MO 63105 MA 02650 CANADA CANADA FL 32778
1421-V 1422-PA 1423-PA 1424-PA 1425-PA	DAVIS, Albert F. SHELDON, Edward F. DOYLE, Patrick P. BRADFIELD, Harold B. SNIDER, EVERETT R.	Al -- Ed Winnie Red/Pat Eleanore Harold Lois Ev Betty	802/773-7225 305/267-6609 216/333-7022 314/843-8248 509/948	W1KUV Pending WBFT WB0GAD 5918	11 Harvard Street 60 No. Christmas Hills Rd. 3345 Goldengate Ave. 7228 Waterford Drive 300 Abbot	Rutland Titusville Rocky River St. Louis Richland	VT 05701 FL 32780 OH 44166 MO 63123 WA 99352
1426-PA 1427-V 1428-V 1429-PA 1430-PA	JOCHIMSEN, Wm. R. BOWMAN, Howard J. WHITE, Elmer YUNGMAN, Donald W. SNELLMAN, Christer F.	Bill Eleanore Howdy Edna Elmer Ruth Don -- "Chris" --	-- 904/357-8020 513/584-2359 805/947-2540 90-315248	W3UV K4TB -- -- DH2BEF	4620 DeRussey Pkwy. 222 Magnolia Lane 890 Cherrybend Rd. RR-4 38473 Carolside Ave., Purjetis 1 a C 22 00960 Helsinki	Chevy Chase Eustis Wilmington Palmdale Helsinki	MD 20015 FL 32726 OH 45177 CA 93550 FINLAND
1431-P 1432-PA 1433 1434 1435	EDDY, JONATHAN TURNER, Donald R.	Jonathan/Chero Rick Linda	518-856-9698 415/663-8917	K2JR WA6DJA	P.O.Box 24 P.O. Box 691	Dickinson Center Point Reyes Sta.	NY 12930 CA 94956

CODE USED ON ADDRESS LABELS: Mail addressed to various foreign countries, especially where Third Class postage is paid takes different rates and also packaging requirements vary. Hence we use some code marks to identify and separate them. Example, while we can mail 3-rd class by sealed envelope in the U.S. if it is marked THIRD CLASS MAIL, mail to most other countries has to go in clasp envelopes unsealed. Hence we use, for example: (C) Shows mail is for Canada. (F) - Foreign except South & Central America; (S) South America, (L) Local Mail, etc. etc.



TECHNICAL ASSOCIATES (New since Publication of last Directory).

24-FA	DERRICK, Wm M.	Bill/Dorothea	609/641-8575	W2LWO	#311, 46-States Park,	Pleasantville	NJ 08232
25-FA	MOREAU, Louise Ramsey	Lou	215/LU-6 8928	W3WRE	305 North Llanwellyn Ave.	Glenolden	PA 19036
26-FA	McMAHON, Morgan E.	Morgan/Gladie	213/375-4272	--	26451 Dunwood Road	Rolling Hills Est.	CA 90274
27-FA	ALTER, James M.	Jim/ Dcd.	215/446-1804	K3AU	325 Strathmore Road	Havertown	PA 19083
28-FA	OSBORNE, Lt. Col. David B.	USAF/RET (Devs/Bess)	WB6LNL		5755 Severin Drive	La Mesa	CA 92041

NEW QTH'S, ETC

SMITH, ROBINETTE, C. (855-PA) W6RZA - 9737 Noble Ave. Sepulveda, CA, 91343, (Change Street Address)
 TIMMONS, CHARLES A. (932-PA) Rt. 1, Box 195, La Conner, Washn. 98257. (Old Address - Anacortes, Washn.)
 LEAL, Albano (235-V) Rue Aristides Lobo 82, Agsonomica Florinopolis, SC. 88.000 Brazil (Formerly at KPH).
 COATES, Fred E. (960-PA) 311 Meridian Drive, Cocoa Beach, Fla. 32931 (Moving from Oxnard, Calif.)
 BROWN, George G. (1256-PA) W2KOC. 274 Willowbrook Road, Staten Island, N.Y. 10302. (Intracity move)
 PACHNER, Stanley F. (807-V) C/O: General Delivery, Allfeghny, Calif. 95910 (Old address - Nevada City, CA).
 HAYES, John F. Jr. (979-PA) 6007 - "B" East 152nd Terrace, Grandview, Mo. 64030 (Moved across St. Bu PO Dept. 'lost' him)
 COLLVINS, Melton W. (1059-PA) WA5BRJ. 4720 Montauk St. Orlando, Fla. 32808 (Moved from Jacksonville, Fla.)
 WILSON, Donald M. - 1100 Berkshire St. Oxnard, CA. 93030 New call WB6UJCT. Delete WA7PZB
 WAHLSTROM, Bob - 331-P Plant City Fla. New Phone - 813/754-3936.
 STARK, Art 1155-V. Add: 613/225-7396. (New Exchange installed).
 HILL, Herbert H. 504 East Republican, Apt. #12, Seattle, Washn. 98122. Phone: 206/322-5190 (Intracity move)
 KAPPERT, VE2ABX. Add H9B 1V4 to address.
 STETSON, Edward M. 5692 Eichen Circle, Ft. Myers, Fla. 33901. (Intracity move).

ADD THE FOLLOWING POSTAL CODE NUMBERS TO THE FOLLOWING CANADIAN MEMBERS ADDRESSES.

BOTTE, K.C. V9B3R5	BOWERMAN, W.J. V8L5S1	BROOMAN, J.P. V8S2C3	FULTON, R.S. V8V2W9
HAAGENSEN, B.J. V8X 3X3	HAMMER, E.L. V9Y 1Y3	KELLY, P.M. V8X 2C4	JENKINS, J.M. V0S 1V0
MACKENZIE, D.O. V8T 1V2	NEALE, G.M. V0R 2T0	ROSSITER, L. V8X 3X2	SMITH, Dave A. V8S 5E9
SMITH N.J. V9A 5Z3	YOUNG, S.L. V8L 1R5		
NEALE, Lt. Cmdr. Geo. M. RCN/R. (639-P) P.O. Box 96, Qualicum Beach, B. C. Canada V0R 2T0 (Moved from Victoria)			
FULTON, R.S. Apt. 211, 1035 Pendergast St. Victoria B. C. V8V 2W9. Phone: 604/386-9681. (Intracity Move)			
DIXON, James L. (686-PA) 2014 Laura St. Jacksonville, Fla. 32206.			

CHAPTER ETERNAL



May We NEVER FORGET Them !

HOME

Beyond the circle of the sea,
When voyaging is past,
We seek our final port in Thee;
Oh! bring us home at last.
In Thee we trust, whate'er befall;
Thy sea is great, our boats are
small.

Henry van Dyke

- 114 INCHLEY, FRANK 1173-V G3AG Frank
Died Dec. 10 1973. Cause reported by Ken Woodman.
FS: 1927 - MS. ABA/GDSW on run England to West Coast
Africa. (MV ABA was sunk during war). Gave many talks
and lectures on Radio throughout Britain. Signals Officer
Tech. Branch RAF to Jan. 1946. Retired 1965 from Eddy-
stone Corpn due Coronary. Collector of antique radio
equipment. QSP by Ken. Woodman.
- 115 SLYFIELD, CHARLES O. 366-P W6WQ Sam"
Report of passing received Jan. 19 1974 from R.O. Cook
who reported cause as cancer. Sam was 75. FS: 1915 on
Car Ferry - Ann Arbor #5/WDP. Worked on many Lake
ships during the early days, USN during WW1 the back to
Lake Duty at Station WPK at Frankfort, Mich. 1921-29,
where he was Radio Supvr. for Ann Arbor RR. at Frankfort.
He received 1st "Pink" ticket issued in Great Lakes Region
#83 at Detroit Feb. 2 1925. Sam built FIRST RADIO
COMPASS on the Great Lakes. Later Sound Engr. with the
Walt Disney Studios (35 years).
- 116 RUSSELL, ADAM J. 502-P WN7MCZ "Russ"
Died Jan. 10 1974 from cancer after prolonged illness in
Tucson, Ariz. Reported by Nephew J.T. Hennessy. FS:
1917 SS DORCHESTER/KOD. Served on many ships till
assigned "WPA" Port Arthur 1924. Later with American
Airlines as R/O including KILK, KGUG, etc. Wife, Grace
survives. QSP by "Irv" Hubbard.
- 117 CURTIS, HARVEY C. 740-V WB6BGX
Mail returned 1-23-74 marked by PO Dept. "Deceased"
No details. FS: 1928 M/S Irene/WQBE. Adm. Evans -
KICZ etc. 1930-1970 with UAL. Many years at Reno and
San Francisco.
- 118 BYERS, HARRISON O. 824-P W0LA "HO"
Died 12-14-73 from heart attack after long condx. FS: 1918
USS WEST COMAS. SOS on SS GEN. GOETHALS/KMZ
1921. Survived by wife Billy. Reported by C.L. Gardner,
QSP: Mike Goulart.
- 119 BOWEN, HAROLD C. 1103-P W1DQ Hal
Died in Sept. 1973. Reported by wife Muriel. No details.
FS: 1917 USS DUPONT/WIDQ. (SOS. Dupont hit rock in
fog Watch Hill R.I 1917) QSP: John Elwood.
- 120 MACLEAN, DONALD N. 900-P "Don"
Died Oct. 20 1973. No details. (Memorial card received)
FS: 1919 SS LAKE LASANG/KMUA. Survived by wife
Lillian. QSP: Capt. E.N. Dingley, Jr.
- 121 BYRNE, LES F. 227-SGP Les
Killed Feb. 27 1974 when train hit him in Mountain View
Calif. Reported by daughter. At "Beach Station" in
S. F. 1907 with A.Y. Tuel et al.
- 122 MOCK, ROY 521-V -- Roy
Died March 1, 1974 from heart condx in Redwood City, CA
Reported by Eb Cady. FS: 1926 Station KEPS "Lazy Bay
Alaska. Many ships and stations since including assign-
ments at KTK, KFS etc. One of the fine operators.
- 123 DAY, LAWRENCE E. 307-P -- "Larry"
Died March 30 1974. Cause unknown. Reported by Eb.
Cady. FS: 1924 - NATS CHAUMONT. Was on SS CITY
OF HONOLULU with Charlie Morenus 1928/9. KHK in
1929, KYG. WW-2 in Signal Corps at WVY. Post war at
KTK and KFS. Survived by wife Grace. (Burlingame, CA
- 124 BARKER, CHARLES R. 269-SGP -- "Russ"
Died Apr. 14 1974, Reported by Frank Giesel. No details
FS: Station "CX" Cleveland 1910. Many years on the
Great Lakes. Taught radio school at Tulane Univ. WW1,
Age 82 at death. Survived by wife Verona.
- 125 SWARTZBERG, DAVID 340-V -- David
Died Jan. 29 1974 of shock in Lynn, Mas. Reported by
Gerry Travis. FS: 1930 SS JUNIATA/KQJ. Worked
steady until 1969 as operators until he had a stroke.
Survived by wife Edna.
- 126 HAYWARD, EDWARD E. 886-SGP W1PH "Ding"
Died May 12 1974 from heart attack. Reported by Gerry
Travis. FS: 1913 - SS BAY STATE, also assigned to SS
GOV. DINGLEY KRV, GOV. 00BB KRB, GLOCESTER
KQG, HALIFAX, VGP. Taught Navy School at Cambridge
Mass. 1918. Survived by wife Ruth.
- 127 BENZON, C. GEORGE 350-P -- George
Died May 14 1974 of coronary at home Dunedin Beach, FL.
FS: 1920 SS Adm. Evans/KICZ. At KPE 1927-29. In
FAA from 1929. Fort Worth, Washn, Bolivia, Greece, Etc.
News via FAA Net and Gerry Whittaker. Wife Mary surv.

SILENT KEYS are not in chronological order but as reported by
various sources since publication of Sparks 1 - 1.

COMING EVENTS

Etc.

JUNE 29 1974 CHAPTER III

Brothertons Farmhouse Restaurant, PASADENA, CA.

JUNE 29 1974 CHAPTER X (*)

Tyson's Corner, Holiday Inn, McLean Va. Noon

JULY 27 1974 - CHAPTER X (*)

Holiday Inn, West. Cantonville, Md. (Washn. D.C. area)

(*) Note: These are organization

al Chapter being formed in the Washington D. C. area. All members in the area are urged to attend. Call or contact John F. "Tex" De Bardeleben W4TE, 2012 Rockingham St. McLean, Va. 22101 Phone: 703/536-8469 for details.

AUG. 22 1974. SWP PICNIC, ARMSTRONG REDWOOD PARK, near Healdsburg, CA. 11AM. State Park admission \$1 per car.

OCT. 24 1974 CHAPTER VII

Captain's Table, Deerfield Beach, Fla (Near Miami-West Palm Beach area). Members contact Gordon Peck or Paul Means for details. Bulletin will be sent all Chapter VII members.

OCT. 24 1974 - BUSINESS MEETING, S.W.P.

Tentatively scheduled to be held in SAN FRANCISCO. Details will be furnished all members when plans and meeting place firmed up.

CHAPTER XI - PICKERILL

Plans for meeting in Trenton will be furnished all members when firmed up by Charlie Maass.

M-MARC CONVENTION OCT. 4-6 HOUSTON TEXAS. Norm Whit Commodore, invites all SWP members to attend.

The Radio Telegrapher

Vol. 1 No. 1



HER MAIDEN TRIP

24.00 - Year

Etc. a Copy

THE BEGINNING OF THE END:

Strange that Page 24 is the "last" page when this issue contains 68 pages but that's the way it works out. A million things to say, but little space left to say it in so we'll have to make it brief.

COMING SPARKS - 3

If you like SPARKS - 2, then we are sure you will like the next issue as we have a lot of fine material for it, such as Eb Cady's story about KFS in WW2, Story of the Pioneer Wirelessnessmen (Chap. 9, SOS TO THE RESCUE) by Karl Baarslag who gave us permission to republish chapters from his thrilling book. Story of the Japanese capturing his ship by the late Eugene B. De Turk. Sea Interlude - a girl radio-officers experience in a man's world. Just a few of the many now ready to go.

At bottom left you will see pix of cover of U.R.T.A. Vol. 1 No. 1 published in April 1920. Cover was drawn by Member Louis Gallo 804-SGP and copy furnished to us by Art. Jacoby.

OFFER is made to BUY BACK your issue of SPARKS - 2 (this issue) if you wish to sell it. A credit of \$1.00 will be issued any who return copies in good condition) We will send them to new members joining

You may like to use a 3-Ring binder for your copy and we are furnishing SPARKS in format to make this possible. Later, we may be able to furnish a 3-Ring binder with Society Logo on front cover.

You will note a few errors (inadvertant) in Table of Contents and actual Page numbers. Primarily Page 10 to 24; 18 and 20 to page 19. SRI about that.

First copy of this issue went to our printer Mar. 28 and last page two months later. Not a simple project as you may note. I can only sincerely say, that I hope you find it enjoyable. It is one way of bringing our members together and making the Society meaningful to them. Kindest wishes from Eb Cady, Ye Ed and all officers to you all. 73 and 50 CX



Folkman - WSAF

HAPPY ENDING

THE SOCIETY OF WIRELESS PIONEERS

Historical Papers



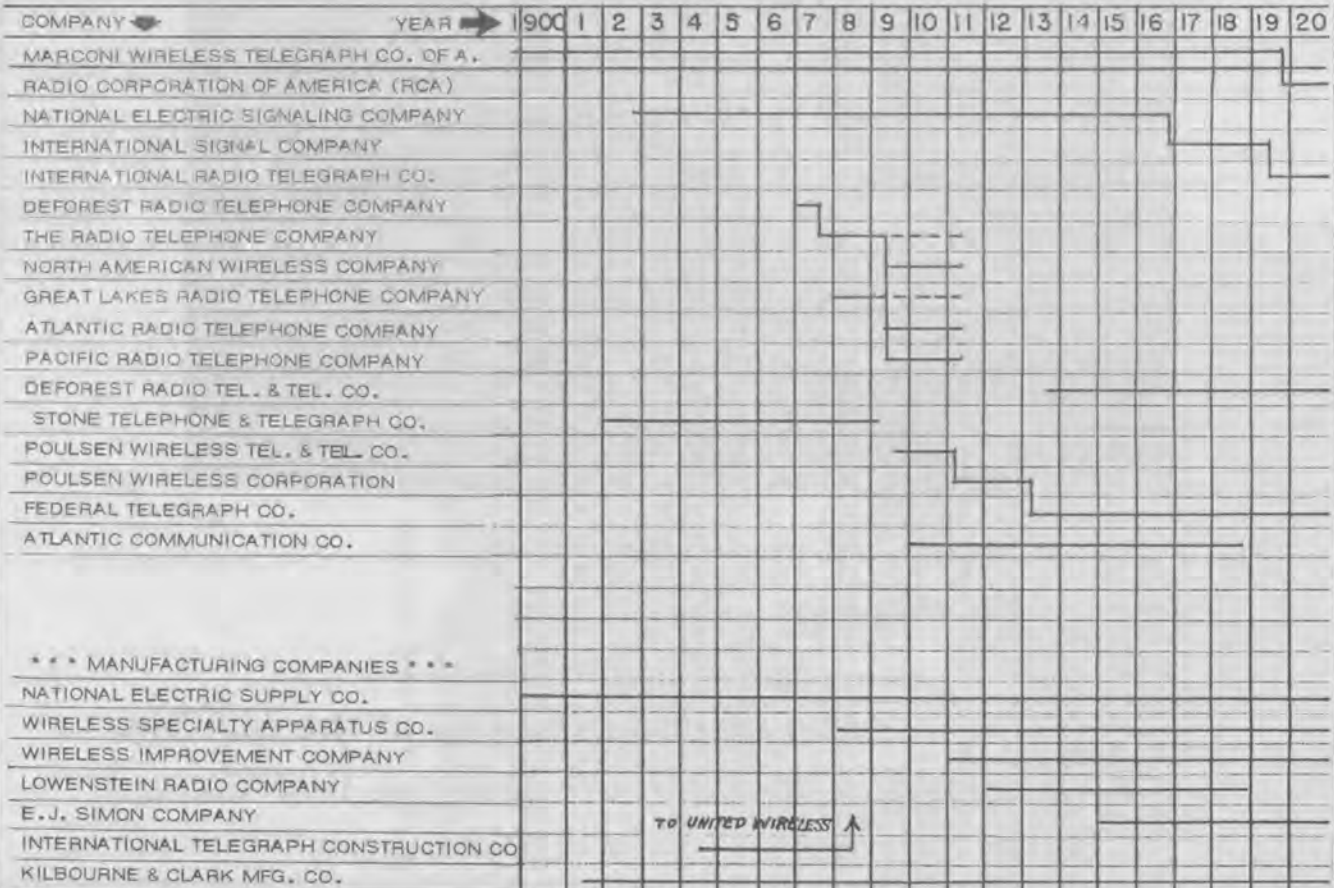
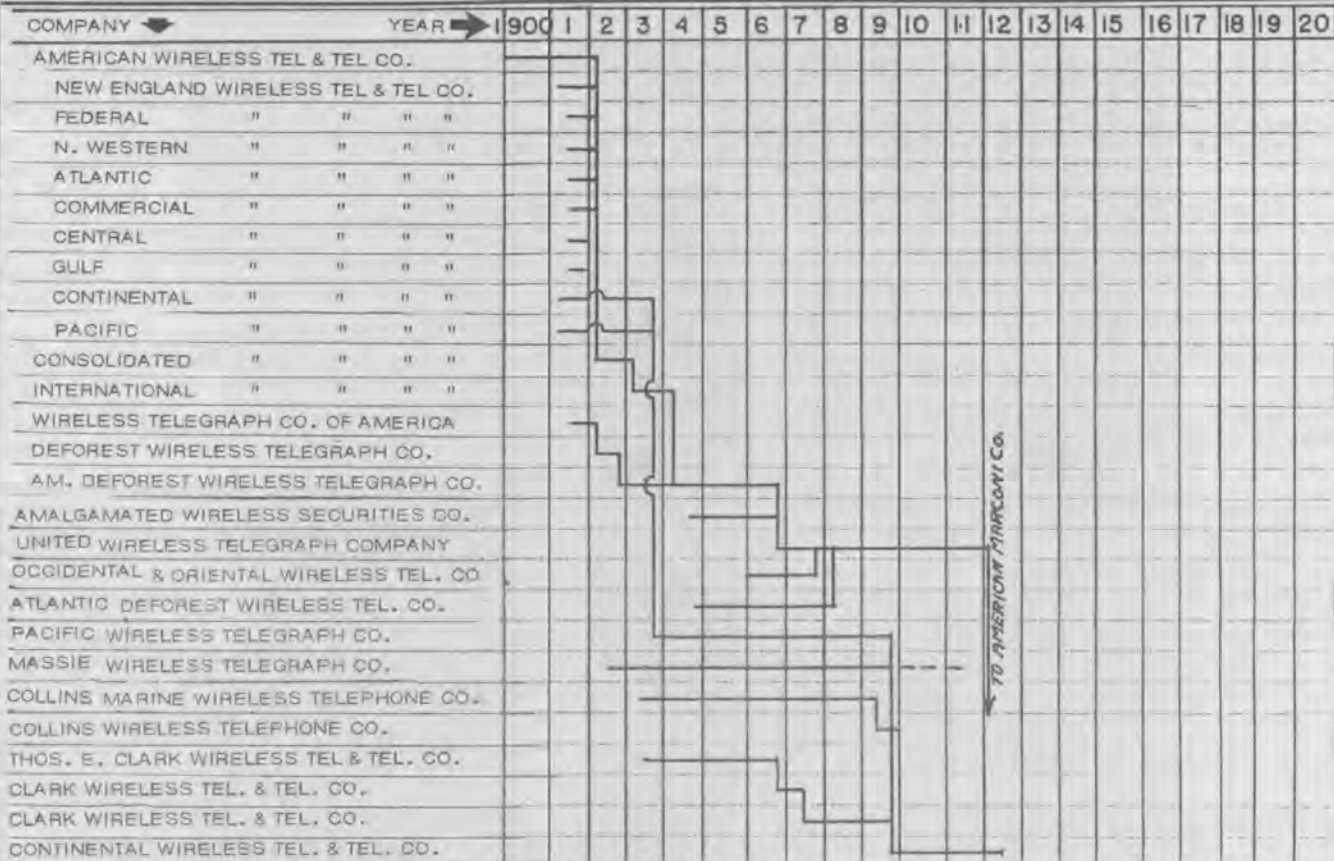
Reprinted by permission -
The Marconi International Marine Company Limited

Where it all began . . .

The granite column marking the site of the Marconi wireless station at Poldhu, used for the first successful Transatlantic transmission in 1901.

This Section dedicated in memory of 'Rudy' Asplund

U.S. WIRELESS COMPANIES 1900 - 1920



Wireless Companies of the U.S.A.

1900 - 1920

By

Thorn L. Mayes

In the brief period from 1899 thru 1919 wireless in the U.S.A. developed from a little known novelty to an essential means of communication. This progress was not due to a large government sponsored R & D program but resulted from the work of individuals and companies working under our free enterprise system. Many different operating companies were formed, most of them short lived, as there was not enough use of wireless in those days to pay operating costs, and many of the companies were formed for the primary purpose of selling worthless stock. In spite of the corruption of the officers of these stock selling companies, they did provide the money for their engineering departments to develop equipment superior to that used by the Marconi companies.

It was an extremely interesting period and the objective of this paper is to record the names of individuals and companies involved on a chronological basis, listing the contributions they made to the development of this new industry.

This work was actually started by Lloyd Espenschied (SWP 462-SGP), one of the real old timers who was a marine wireless operator for United Wireless Telegraph Co. 1907-1908 and later became an outstanding development scientist for the Bell Laboratories. In July of 1965 Lloyd made a partial listing of the major wireless companies. After preparing a chart of them, he made the following comments, "The astronomical capitalizations of these companies were partially myth, in a sense that no such sums were paid in. And such millions as were extracted from the mislead public probably went in large part into the pockets of the promoters who sold as treasury stock blocks they had distributed among themselves in forming the companies."

"To determine the corporate relationships and the histories of these companies would require the services of a Philadelphia lawyer, so involved and crooked were the dealings. No wonder several of the promoters went to jail for fraud, such as C.C. Wilson head of United Wireless and A. Frederick Collins of the Collins Wireless Telephone Co. circa 1909."

While reviewing the papers of the late Haraden Pratt (SWP 252-SGP), another famous old timer, I found an old undated chart he had made of the wireless companies 1899-1924 indicating his interest in this subject.

Stock selling in the early part of this period is dramatically told by a stock salesman Frank Fayant writing in Success magazine for January-June and July 1907. He gives a most interesting picture of their crooked tactics.

As practically all of the companies involved have been out of existence for over fifty years, there are no company records available. Fortunately the

States have kept their incorporation records which include formation date, names of officers, capitalization and location. Additional material comes from call books, newspaper and trade journal articles and the recollections of Old Timers who lived through the period.

An unpublished book, "Our Radio Ancestors," by Robert Marriott, in the archives of IEEE New York Office gives much information on his early experiences. An eleven page condensation by Haraden Pratt was published in the IEEE Spectrum of June 1968.

I am especially indebted to the following for encouragement, information and help for without their assistance, this paper would not have been possible. Lloyd Espenschied, Gerald Tyne, the late Haraden Pratt, Ed Raser, Bruce Kelley and Bob Merriam.

Most of you have lived through a period where the radio telephone has been a necessary means of communication with airplanes, ships at sea and many cannot remember when we have not had radio broadcasting. It is hard to realize radio is a relatively recent invention, but in 1900 there was only one wireless telegraph station in the U.S. The wireless telephone had to wait for the development of vacuum tubes that would handle several watts of power to generate the carrier. There were a few experimental wireless telephones before that time that used an arc to generate the carrier.

Robert Marriott for a number of years was the Radio Inspector of the Seattle area. He collected data from transmitter licensing records throughout the country and presented the material at the 1915 San Francisco Exposition in a paper, "U.S. Radio Development." The following material through 1915 comes from that paper, from 1915 to 1920 from U.S. call books.

The number of commercial land and ship stations by years from 1900 through 1920 is shown in Fig. 1. The increase was slow until 1912 when two events caused it to rise. The sinking of the Titanic in April showed the importance of marine wireless in saving lives at sea and the U.S. Ship Act passed that year requiring any ship carrying fifty people or more including crew, be equipped with wireless having a daytime range of at least 100 miles.

World War I and the building of our Merchant Marine was responsible for the increase from 650 ship sets in 1916 to nearly 5,000 by the end of 1920.

As the period of greatest activity in formation of wireless telegraph companies was 1900-1910, and as their only profitable operation was marine traffic, lets review Fig. 2 which covers that period. Note that there were thirty ships equipped in 1905 and only 200 by 1910. There were 150 land stations by

1910. United Wireless published the map shown by Fig. 3 in 1909 showing the location of their 100 stations concentrated along both coasts and around the Great Lakes. This number was necessary to maintain contact with coastwise shipping.

The late Commander Richard Johnstone, who was an operator at station KPH San Francisco 1914-1917 says in his book, "My San Francisco Story of the Water-front and the Wireless." Thirty United Wireless west coast stations were in operation by 1912. In 1964, R.C.A. station KPH at Bolinas with its modern equipment has no difficulty taking care of all Pacific Coast requirements."

Fig. 4 shows a typical United Wireless station of 1909. With 2 KW input it had a dependable day-light range over land of 100 miles, over water, 200-300 miles. With this type of spark equipment it took fifteen stations to relay a message from San Diego to Seattle by day.

Fig. 5 shows the life span of the first twenty seven wireless operating companies incorporated in the U.S. by 1920. The first twelve were formed by Dr. Gustav Gehring of Philadelphia, the second seven by Dr. Lee DeForest. Only these first two groups will be reviewed in this paper.

GEHRING WIRELESS TEL. & TEL. COMPANIES

The Gehring group, Fig. 6 starts with the American Wireless Telephone and Telegraph Co. incorporated under the laws of the Territory of Arizona Nov. 11, 1899, the first wireless company in the U.S. It was capitalized at five million dollars and was formed to exploit the wireless patents of Dolbear and Shoemaker. A holding company to supply patent and legal protection, designs and trained operators to nine subsidiaries formed in 1901, each assigned a section of the U.S. as its area of operations.

Robert Marriott graduated from college in June 1901 and immediately went with American Wireless as an engineer. He states that they built three stations on the east coast at Gallilee, Briele and Barnegate, N.J. plus a temporary shipboard station for reporting the American Cup yacht races the fall of 1901. These stations were all built for the purpose of promoting stock sales, not for handling messages.

After the races, Marriott joined the Continental and Pacific companies as chief engineer. These two companies had the same officers, were assigned the western part of the U.S. and had their headquarters at Denver. He convinced the officers that their first stations should be located where a need existed so they selected Avalon, Catalina Island and San Pedro, California.

As American still did not have manufacturing facilities in the east, Marriott designed the two stations, built the parts in Denver, then installed them in California. Transmitters consisted of a small gas engine driven generator supplying power to an induction coil. Receiver used a simple tuning coil and for detector, a steel needle pressing against the side of an oxidized piece of Prince Albert tobacco can.

First messages were exchanged July 1902, making these the first two stations built in the U.S. for the handling of commercial messages.

Marriott said most of the residents of Avalon believed the messages were exchanged with San Pedro by means of carrier pigeons until the following incident took place: Two local characters one night robbed the Metropole hotel of its cash and a couple of cases of liquor, escaping on the 5 AM ferry to San Pedro. This system had worked several times successfully in the past as the earliest contact with San Pedro was via the 11 AM ferry. The hotel management believed in the wireless, thought they knew the robbers, so sent a message to the San Pedro police who met the early ferry and arrested the surprised culprits.

These stations continued operation and later supplied material for a small daily paper printed in Avalon, the first of its kind in the U.S.

By August 1903 the Pacific and Continental companies were broke so their officers moved to Seattle, formed the Pacific Wireless Telegraph Co. capitalized for five million dollars and took over the two California stations for five thousand dollars.

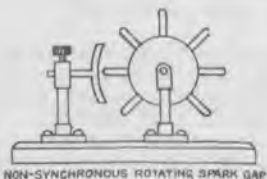
Meanwhile the North West Wireless Tel. & Tel. Co. with headquarters in Milwaukee, set up a station and installed a set on one of the ferry boats of

THE SOCIETY OF
WIRELESS PIONEERS

FIGURE - 4

UNITED WIRELESS STATION
"CH"
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.

1909



28





FIGURE - 8

PICTURE OF DEFOREST RECEIVING EQUIPMENT FURNISHED TO THE UNITED STATES NAVY - CIRCA 1903. At left is 2-coil SYNTONIZER or tuner. Left Center is a SPADE-type ELECTROLYTIC DETECTOR. See Page 33 for details.

USN - Photo.

THE SOCIETY OF WIRELESS PIONEERS

the Perc Marquette line to demonstrate the use of wireless on shipboard.

The Atlantic Co. built a station in Atlantic City for stock selling purposes which was closed by early 1902 as the company was broke.

Federal hired Greenleaf W. Pickard as chief engineer. He later became a prominent wireless engineer and inventor.

Stock sales by the various companies had not been as good as expected, several of the companies were broke so in February 1902 Gehring formed the Consolidated Wireless Tel. & Tel. Co., capitalized for twenty five million.

The new company soon absorbed the American, New England, North Western, Federal and Atlantic Wireless Tel. & Tel. Companies and by mid year the capitalization had been reduced to 7.5 million. The company was short lived for in Feb. 1903 Gehring formed the International Wireless Tel & Tel. Co. under the Laws of the State of N.J. with a capitalization of 7.5 million which immediately took over the Consolidated Co.

The original ten companies had a total capitalization of 50 million which was now reduced to 7.5 million or the face value of an original purchasers stock had dropped to fifteen percent of its original cost.

The Post-Telegram of Camden, N.J. Jan. 6, 1904 carried this article. "The annual meeting of the stockholders of the International Wireless Telegraph Co. was held this morning for the purpose of electing a board of Directors and to take final action on the question of consolidating with the American DeForest Wireless Telegraph Co."

"Vice President and General Manager Gehring presented a report in which he said the company was in flourishing condition but was handicapped for want of finances."

"A lengthy resolution having for its purpose the consolidation of the International Co. with the DeForest Co. was read and adopted without a single dissenting vote. Under the terms of the consolidation the International Co. stockholders will re-

cover 7 million dollars of stock. The consolidation it was claimed will control the patents of Dolbear, Collins, Shoemaker and DeForest."

The Gehring group tried several times to get out of the DeForest Co. but with the unscrupulous Abraham White in charge, this was impossible, so Gehring's wireless stock selling spree was over.

Gehring never intended to furnish needed communication service with any of his companies. They were formed for the one purpose of providing worthless stock to be sold by promoters, with most of the money going to them, little to the operation of the companies. The few stations they built with the exception of the two in California were for the purpose of boosting sales.

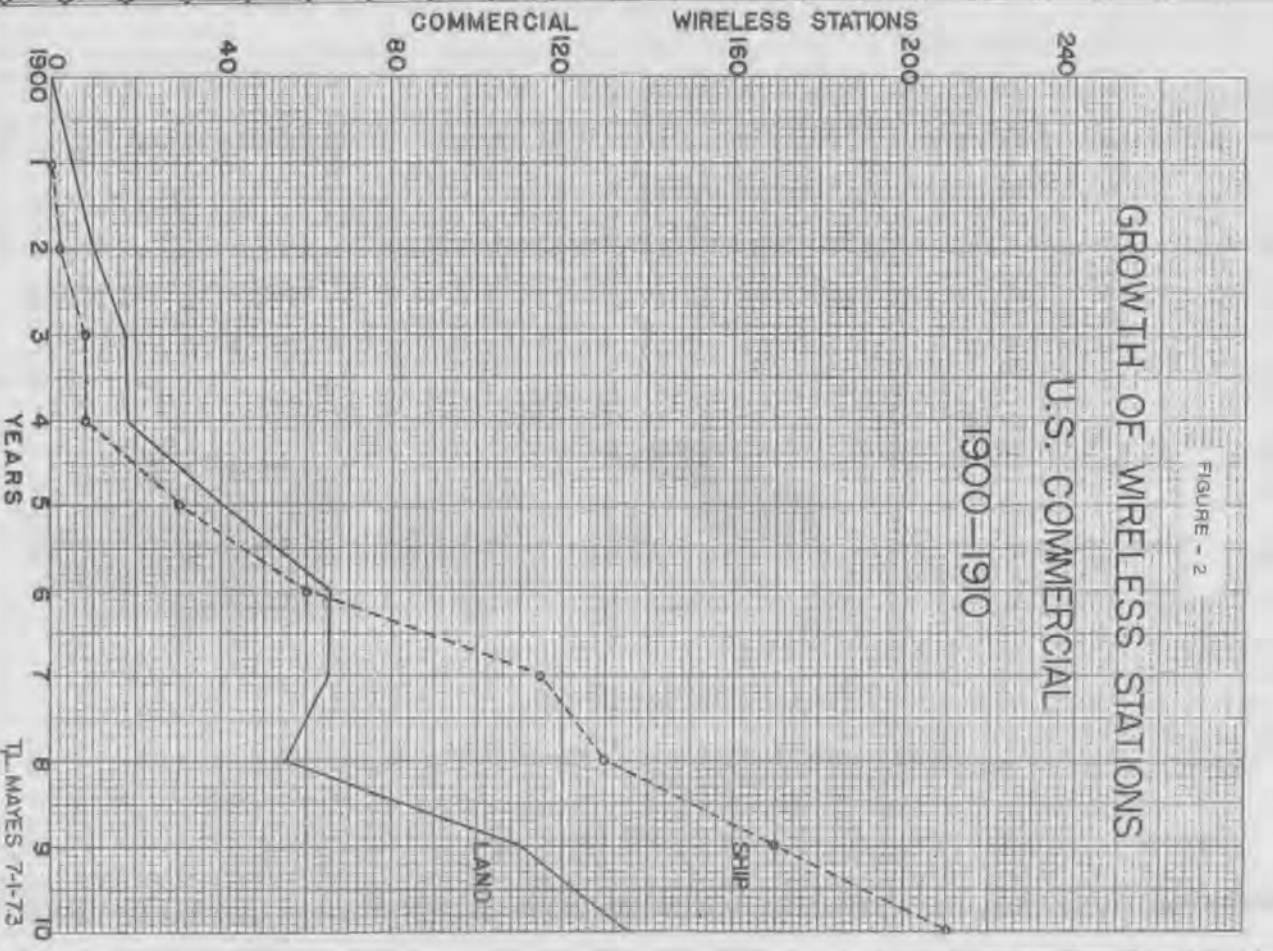
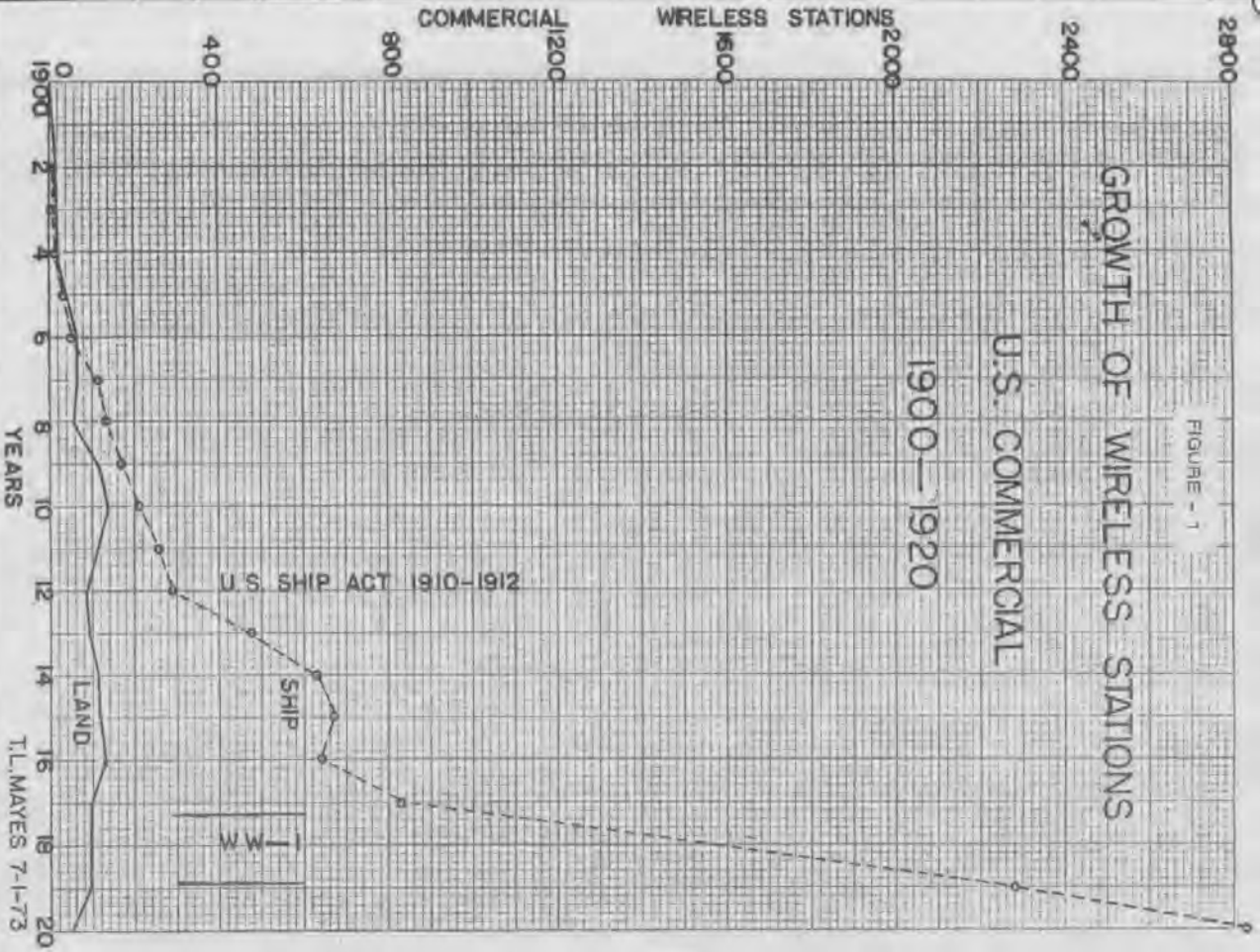
During this period, Shoemaker had taken out 70 patents on wireless equipment and had developed both transmitters and receivers well ahead of any then available. Later he was to build and sell these designs to the Navy.

The major gain from this overall operation was in getting three engineers started in wireless who later made real contributions to advancing the art. They were Harry Shoemaker, Robert Marriott and Greenleaf W. Pickard.

DEFOREST U.S. WIRELESS TELEGRAPH COMPANIES

The second group of wireless telegraph companies are those formed by Lee DeForest and Abraham White, shown in Fig. 7. Starting with the Wireless Telegraph Co. of America, founded Sept. 1901, capitalized at three thousand dollars and ending with the United Wireless Telegraph Co. capitalized for twenty million that was taken over by the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Co. of America early in 1912.

I had hoped to find much material in DeForest's book, "Father of Radio" that could be used in this paper but was disappointed as the book is not written in chronological order and he is not consistent in company names or important dates. It is not written as a record by a scientist of his life's work and accomplishments. His series of articles in Radio News of 1925, "Life and Work of Lee DeForest," is an improvement but I quote from these sources only to give you DeForest's impressions of specific events.



Lee DeForest became interested in wireless while at college and after graduating in 1900 found a job with Western Electric in Chicago where he met Edwin Smythe who was also experimenting with wireless. They joined forces and in that year filed a joint patent application on their responder or detector. It was of the electrolytic type consisting of two pieces of metal mounted close together, the space between them filled with a "goo" they had developed experimentally.

With this detector by mid 1901, they were able to pick up signals from a spark coil transmitter over a distance of four miles.

DeForest worked part time at the Armour Institute where he met Professor Freeman who had conceived of but not built a wireless transmitter using a 500 volt D.C. generator to charge in parallels a number of capacitors which by means of a commutator were connected in series to discharge across a spark gap and excite the aerial. The three continued their experimental work with Smythe and Freeman providing the money.

DeForest convinced Smythe and Freeman that there was more wireless activity on the east coast than in the Chicago area and in August moved their equipment to Jersey City.

He saw an opportunity to gain publicity for their system by reporting the American Cup yacht races that fall by wireless so started looking for someone who would finance the operation. The Marconi Wireless Telegraph Co. of America was reporting for the Associated Press but DeForest was able to get a contract from Publishers Press who agreed to pay him \$800 if he successfully reported the results. He also found a financier, Charles Seidler who advanced \$1000 for an interest in the company DeForest planned to form.

As there are many conflicting stories concerning the formation of the first DeForest wireless company, I will quote from the original minute book of the company which is filed in the Foothill College Electronics Museum.

1. Name: Wireless Telegraph Co. of America.
2. Location of principal office: #1 Exchange Place, Jersey City, N.J.

3. Company Objectives: To purchase, lease and license, but not to sell or dispose of the following inventions except by unanimous vote of all stockholders, three patent applications listed, two by DeForest, one by Freeman.
4. Capitalization: \$5,000. 60 shares of stock, \$50 par value each.
5. Incorporators:
Lee DeForest, New Haven Ct., Assgd. 16 shares
Clarence Freeman, Chicago, Assgd. 16 shares
Edwin Smythe, Chicago, Assigned 16 shares
Charles Seidler, New York City, 9 shares
M.F. Stires, Jersey City, Assgd. 5 shares
Formed under the laws of the State of New Jersey, County of Hudson, the 25rd day of September 1901.

With the company formed, DeForest concentrated on preparations for the coming race. After several delays, the race was held. DeForest started with the Freeman transmitter which immediately failed so he continued with a Ruhmkoff spark coil. Shoemaker and Pickard of American Wireless Tel. & Tel. Co. used a 20 inch coil and drowned out the other two reporting sets.

DeForest did get some publicity from the races and soon afterward met Colonel John Firth, a salesman and promoter. As all of the stock of the Wireless Telegraph Co. of America had been issued to the incorporators, there was none to sell to the public to raise money for operations so in Feb. 1902 with Firth's help, the DeForest Wireless Telegraph Co. was incorporated under the laws of the State of Maine with a capitalization of \$3 million. The new company immediately took over the old one and DeForest states that stock sales were so good that he raised his salary to thirty dollars per week.

A demonstration station was built in Jersey City with a receiving set in New York City. The original responder was not satisfactory and as he had seen the electrolytic detector developed by Fessenden in 1902, he built a variation of the design which he used until 1906.

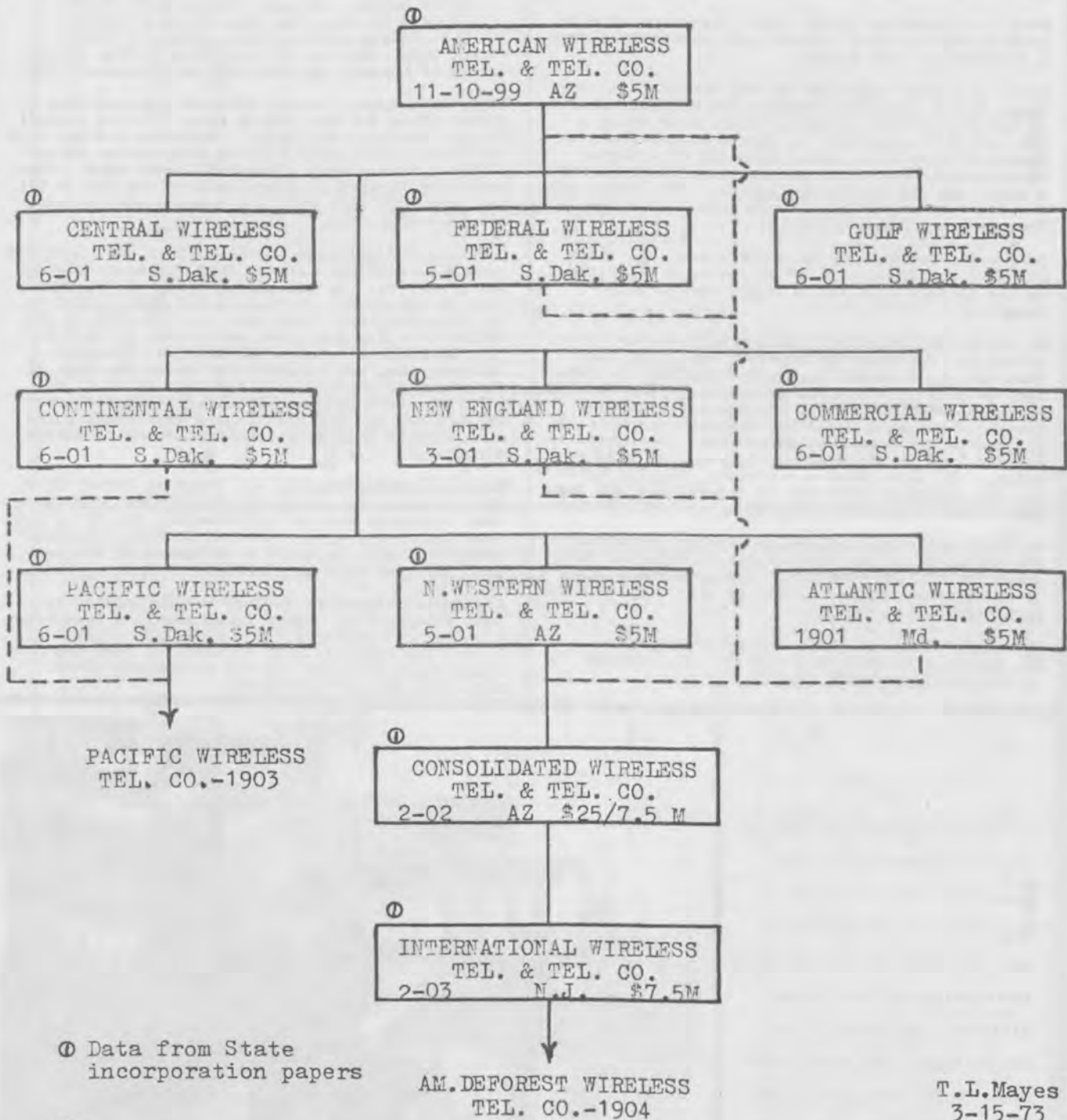
A pamphlet issued in 1902 by the DeForest Wireless Telegraph Co. lists three stations in operation, at #17 State St., New York City, Staten Island and Coney Island, in addition they had installed two stations for the government at Ft. Wadsworth and on Sandy Hook.

FIGURE - 9

AMERICAN DeFOREST EXHIBIT AT ST. LOUIS WORLD'S FAIR 1904 ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR AT THE FAIR. DR. LEE DeFOREST SEATED (OPERATING EQUIPMENT) ABRAHAM WHITE (PROMOTER) STANDING. SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATION ESTABLISHED WITH CHICAGO (300 MILES) FROM THE FAIR STATION, (Story - Page 33)



GEHRING WIRELESS TEL. & TEL. COMPANIES
 1899-1904



T.L. Mayes
 3-15-73

Early in 1902 Firth introduced DeForest to Abraham White, a promoter par-excellence. He states in his, "Father of Radio," that White soon saw great possibilities in wireless and an opportunity to sell stock. By mid-year he was president of the company and had convinced DeForest that the capitalization was too small so in Dec. the name was changed to American DeForest Wireless Telegraph Co. with capitalization of five million dollars.

Under White's leadership the company gained much publicity as he frequently gave statements to the press concerning future plans. Electrical World for May 9, 1903 contains the following item: "Dr. Lee DeForest has just returned from a trip through the West and to the Pacific Coast. At Cape Flattery, the extreme Northwest point of the U.S., a site has been secured for a trans-Pacific wireless telegraph station. Here three towers 225 feet high will be erected supporting three vertical screens of wire. The power of the station will be 90 horse power and it will operate with similar stations at Dutch Harbor which will be a relay station to Nome, Alaska. The service will be carried westward to Kamchatka, Russia and Japan. Work is now under way at Cape Flattery and it is estimated the station will be ready for operation September 1905." These stations were never built.

The American Cup yacht races were to be held in 1905 and DeForest again made arrangements to report them. In mid-year he sent a 1 KW set and his operator Harry MacHorton to Glasgow to install the equipment on Sir Thomas Lipton's yacht Erin. When 90 miles offshore, the station at Coney Island picked up the Erin's signals and was in communication from then on.

As in previous reporting, American Marconi had a contract with Associated Press, DeForest with their competitor. He installed a 2 KW set on a tugboat for transmitter but this time Shoemaker and Pickard of International Wireless Tel. & Tel. Co. used a 2 KW 120 cycle transmitter mounted on a schooner having two high masts for supporting the antenna.

DeForest in his article, "Life and Work of Lee DeForest," Radio News of March 1925 states, "As soon as the preliminary reports began to come in, the 2KW set on the schooner let loose and in the words of the operators, it certainly tore the ether all to Hell. None were able to receive as much as one complete code word. The schooner was declared in wireless circles the winner by a foul."

American DeForest stations had been in communication up to 400 miles but a new record was established when the stations at Cleveland and Erie were put into operation the summer of 1904. DeForest in his "Life and Work of Lee DeForest" Radio News for March 1925 states, "The 180 odd miles of ground and water lying between the two stations were bridged and the company had broken another record for long distance transmission. It was the greatest overland distance covered by wireless telegraph up to that time in 1904."

"This success was partly due to the installation of a complete tuning arrangement at the receiving ends. This consisted of two double slide tuning coils in electromagnetic relation. One of them as the aerial inductance and the other as the secondary inductance. This was the first real adaptation of adjustable tuning to commercial radio apparatus. The principles of tuning had been known since the classical experiments of Hertz but the various experimenters in the practical branch of the art never until this time discovered the real value of the adjustable tuning circuit, or how to take practical, operative advantage of that principle."

THE SOCIETY OF
WIRELESS PIONEERS

DeForest is wrong in the above statements for Shoemaker and others were using inductive coupling for obtaining accurate tuning at that time. Jerry Type states that in 1903 John Stone Stone of the Stone Tel. & Tel. Co. was measuring and plotting resonance curves of tuned circuits.

I give this quotation only to show the importance DeForest placed in the performance of the new receivers.

Fig. 8 is a picture of early receiving gear furnished the Navy by American DeForest. The spade type electrolytic detector is in the center and on the left, the two coil Syntonizer or tuner as described by DeForest above. The Syntonizer name plate is stamped—Patented Sept. 30, 1902.

A review of patent files shows that none were issued to DeForest on that date but #710,121 was issued to Harry Shoemaker for a wireless tuner and to C.D. Ehret, Shoemaker's patent attorney. #710,121 later appears on Syntonizer nameplates.

In January 1904 the Gehring company, International Wireless Tel. & Tel. Co. was absorbed into American DeForest and Harry Shoemaker was their chief engineer. It was Shoemaker's receiver design used at Cleveland and Erie stations as described by DeForest, that gave the improved performance.

Lloyd Espenschied in a memo dated Oct. 27, 1963 comments on transmitter design as follows. "When I was a wireless telegraph operator aboard ship for United Wireless the summers of 1907-08, I was given to understand that the spark transmitters then used by United, bearing the insignia of American DeForest Wireless Tel. Co. had been designed by Harry Shoemaker. Those transmitters were notably superior to the spark-coil transmitters of the Marconi equipments of the time, for they used AC derived from motor-alternators and an open core transformer, whereby more power was had.

Of course DeForest gives no credit to Shoemaker for furnishing the AC driven transmitter that was the key to the success of the American DeForest company.

The St. Louis Fair of 1904 offered an excellent opportunity for publicity. American DeForest erected a 300 foot steel tower with elevators to the visitors platform at the 400 foot level and to the wireless station at the top.

DeForest seated and Abraham White standing in the station are shown in Fig. 9. Their exhibit was one of the most popular at the fair.

Electrical World for November 1904 states that successful communication was held between the fair station and Chicago, a distance of 300 miles.

A brochure issued by American DeForest late in 1904 names 17 land stations then in operation and 9 more under construction in the U.S. It also lists 65 wireless patents now under their control, 53 of which were issued to Harry Shoemaker.

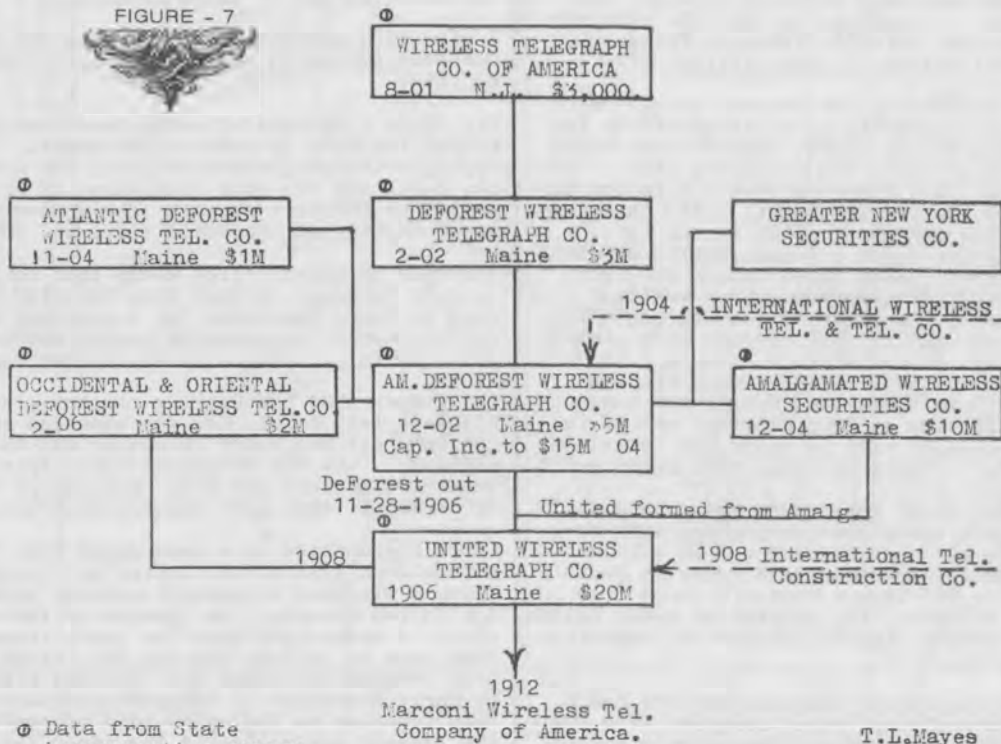
In mid 1904 Shoemaker had a policy disagreement with DeForest and White so resigned and formed his own company with John Firth as manager, The International Telegraph Construction Co. capitalized for \$100,000. This company was a very successful supplier of parts to the wireless industry and an important source of equipments for the Navy until it was taken over by United Wireless in 1908.

The Atlantic DeForest Wireless Telegraph Co. was formed in 1904 with a capitalization of one million dollars. All of its stock was owned by

DEFOREST U.S. WIRELESS TELEGRAPH COMPANIES

1901—1907

FIGURE - 7



THORN L. MAYES (Left) talking with "Spark-Gap" PIONEER, JOSEPH P. DANKO (253) W6ZYF. Joe was on duty at Naval Radio Station "NAH" April 15 1912 and established sole contact with the S.S. CARPATHIA receiving the first complete list of HMS TITANIC survivors for relay via W.U. LL. to AP NYC.

THORN MAYES has been and continues as TECHNICAL EDITOR and Consultant to the Society of Wireless Pioneers. He is also Vice President and Consulting Engineer for the PERHAM FOUNDATION, Inc. which dedicated the Electronics Museum at the Foothill Community College's Space Science Center in Jan. 1973. Thorn is head of the Advisory Board for AWA (Antique Wireless Association, Inc.) District 6. He has one of the largest collections of early day equipment and artifacts on the West Coast. Collection displayed at right was presented by Thom during the 1969 (picnic) meeting of the SOCIETY OF WIRELESS PIONEERS at Walnut Creek, Calif.



SOCIETY OF WIRELESS PIONEERS Picnic and reunion of members held August 22 1969. Some of the equipment (Marine) displayed by THORN L. MAYES, observed by: (L/R)

John J. "Mac" McCarthy W6MC, Bill Breniman ex "6BE" Frank Geisel X-KPH, Richard "Dick" Johnstone (First President of the Society), Eb Cady (front) X-KFS and currently President of SWP, Jim Caldwell (rear) Early day operator and Southwest Area Director of the Society. At extreme right W. Earle Wohler (Commodore) of the Society and its first Senior Vice President,

White and all Atlantic coast stations assigned to this company. It was the only one of the DeForest telegraph companies to make a profit.

Late in 1904 the Navy asked for bids on five stations of 20 and 25 KW power to be installed at the following bases: Key West, Pensacola, San Juan, Guantanamo, Cuba and Colon, Panama. American DeForest was low bidder at \$65,000, for the five stations installed. They were completed by mid 1905 and all operated satisfactorily.

It would be difficult to determine just how many stations were built by American DeForest. For example Ed Raser has a memo from Elmo Pickerell who installed the following eight stations during 1905 for stock selling purposes in Denver, Trinidad, Boulder, Ft. Collins, Leadville, Cripple Creek and Altman in Colorado, also in Cheyenne, Wyoming. None of these stations are listed in the call books of 1906-7-8 and all were dismantled soon after United Wireless was formed.

Electrical World of November 1905 lists 41 land stations then in operation with 25 marine sets and an estimate of 25 more marine units for 1906.

On several occasions president White had said that American DeForest would build a wireless telegraph chain to the Orient. In February 1906 the Occidental and Oriental Wireless Telegraph Co. was formed, capitalized for one million dollars to carry on this work.

When the main American DeForest station "PH" in San Francisco was destroyed in April 1906, Occidental and Oriental rebuilt the station on Russian Hill in 1907. The station was sold to United Wireless in 1908. This was the end of the Occidental and Oriental Co. for with the formation of United Wireless, plans for the Oriental chain were dropped.

Station "DF" at Manhattan Beach was the most powerful in the American DeForest system. It had been copied in Colon, Panama, a distance of 2150 miles. But president White wanted to be able to report its spanning the Atlantic so in Feb. 1906 DeForest sailed for Ireland with receiving gear and kites for supporting an antenna. He met Horton an expert operator in London, then proceeded to Glengariff for listening tests. DeForest states in "Father of Radio" that they were not able to pick up the 40 KW DF transmitter, that on April 1, after listening a couple of weeks, they moved 50 miles West along the coast and finally on April 11 faintly heard "DF" but did not copy a message.

Meanwhile back in New York City, White issued a notice taking half of the first page of the financial section of the New York Herald of April 8, 1906 in which he states he received the following confirming cable sent by DeForest from Glengariff, Ireland. "Messages being received clearly, transatlantic wireless now assured."

Fessenden had filed a suit in 1903 claiming DeForest's spade detector was an infringement of his electrolytic detector patent. In mid 1906 the courts upheld Fessenden's claims.

American DeForest was using the spade detector in all of its stations and had sold many of them to the Navy. Haraden Pratt in his paper, "Sixty Years of Wireless and Radio Reminiscences," states, "The American DeForest Wireless Telegraph Co. had lost the famous patent suit on the electrolytic detector in 1906 which had been in the courts for three years, which decision resulted in the firing of DeForest and later president Abe White."

White held DeForest as chief engineer, responsible for having to change detectors in all stations. Fortunately General H.H. Dunwoody, who had patented the carborundum detector, was now an officer of the company so his crystal detector replaced the DeForest electrolytic.

In a final meeting with White, Nov. 28, 1906, DeForest submitted his letter of resignation. He was given as a termination allowance his audion patents which were then considered worthless, plus \$1,000 but the lawyer making out the separation papers took \$500 for his work, leaving DeForest with only \$500 in cash.

Late November 1906 President White announced in the New York papers that he was combining the American DeForest Wireless Telegraph Co. with the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Co. of America into a single new wireless monopoly, called the United Wireless Telegraph Co. The next day the same papers printed statements by officials of the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Co. of America denying that they had even been approached on such a combination.

United Wireless was formed by White in December as a Maine corporation from the Amalgamated Wireless Securities Corp., was capitalized for twenty million dollars and took over the assets of the American DeForest Co. early in 1907.

United Wireless went into receivership in 1911 when its six top officers were convicted by the U.S. Government of using the mails to defraud in promoting the sale of worthless stock, and were sentenced to prison terms.

The appointed new management immediately introduced drastic cost reduction programs. All stations that had been built to promote stock sales were closed. Two of the three manufacturing plants were closed and used for warehouses for dismantled parts.

The volume of marine business was now so large that United Wireless could have operated as a profitable company but the loosing of a basic patent suit in 1912 to the British Marconi Co. was too hard a blow so they gave up.

The histories of these companies are typical of the trials involved in developing a market for an entirely new product or service. It takes years to build the volume up to a profitable level and during that period, operations are in the red.

These companies provided a much needed service to ships at sea during this unprofitable period. They also developed equipment superior to that used by the Marconi companies and supplied our Navy with American built wireless gear. This progress was due to the vision, enthusiasm and hard work of their engineers, Shoemaker, DeForest, Marriott, Pickard and others who continued to contribute to the improvement of wireless communication. -30-

Coming...

We hope to complete the Story of "WIRELESS COMPANIES OF THE U.S.A. 1899 - 1920" in coming issues of our new "SPARKS".

We tentatively plan to publish a Historical Review of the FEDERAL TELEPHONE AND RADIO CORPORATION - 1909 to 1946. This was furnished to us by I.T.T. and is an article authored by F.J. Mann, Managing Editor of ELECTRICAL COMMUNICATION, which was their Technical Journal. We think you will like it.

William A. Breniman - Editor

Land Station Locations of U. W. T. in 1908

FIGURE - 3
Map showing locations of the land stations of the UNITED WIRELESS TELEGRAPH CO. (UWT) in 1908. The Chart outlines the most extensive system in the world - at that time.

THE SOCIETY OF
 WIRELESS PIONEERS

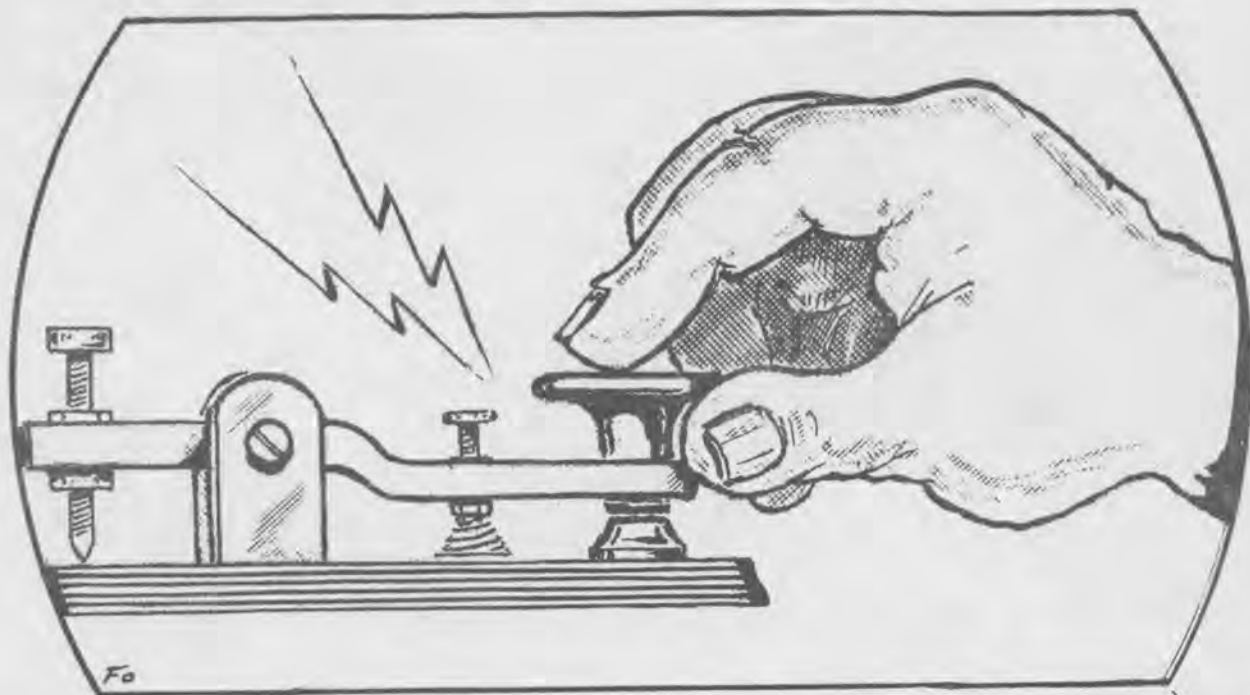


Furnished by Thom L. Mayes

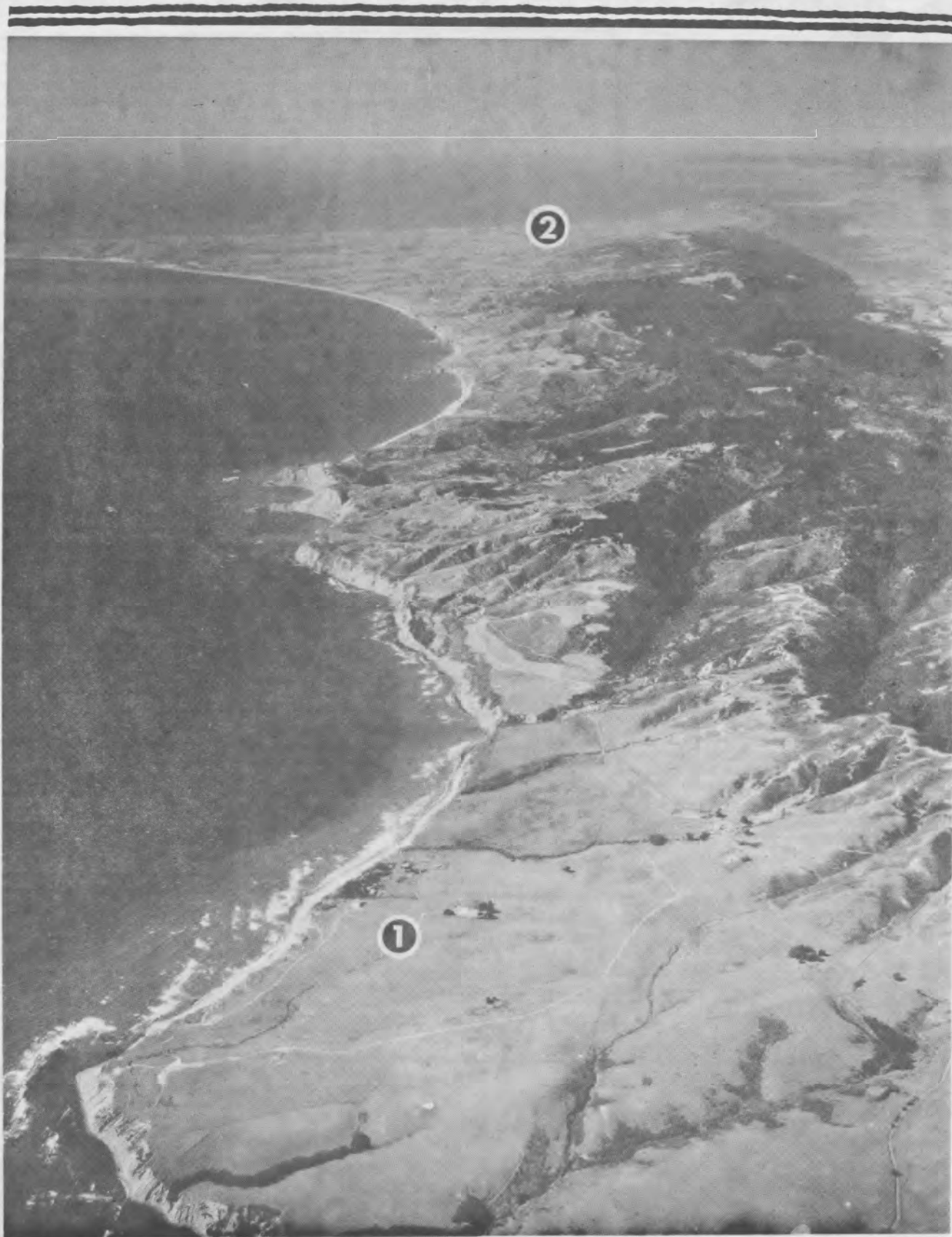


Tales...

of The Wireless Pioneers



DEDICATED TO
Henry Dickow



LOOKING NORTH FROM DUXBURY POINT. DRAKES BAY, POINT REYES (UPPER LEFT) TOMALES BAY (UPPER RIGHT). (1) BOLINAS, (2) STATION "KPH".



The 1960's

'The Golden Age'

By -
Warren "Si" Simpson

It is no news to old bug and deep-sea bucket men that KPH has always been one of the most dynamic and spectacular ship-to-shore stations in the history of radio telegraphy. Its cowboy sweep and round-up style at "Observer Time" was more authentic than any pseudo Western on celluloid film. Even from as far back as its ancient "Spark" days the bellowing tones of KPH became famous throughout the Pacific. It stood on the sea-coast like the gates of Hercules. But all things change and inevitably there will come a time when an Earth Satellite, launched into the future skies, will take over the ship-to-shore communications in the Pacific. If this should happen maybe someday a traveller from an antique land will come upon the abandoned antenna legs of wood and stone half buried in the shifting sands and wonder, "KPH? Who was KPH?"

Before this station finally disappears it is hoped that those who have known its history will take time to write it down. From its long and colorful career a collection, or an "Anthology of Old KPH Tales" could be compiled. A record of its early phases would include the 1904 location at the San Francisco Palace Hotel (call letters "PH"), then the move to Russian Hill, and another to Daly City in 1908. In a later age it moved north and roared like a dinosaur from the hills of Marshall. Surely there is some ancient aerial mariner who can tell us more about the Marshall days, including that forgotten haunted house once called a "Hotel".

It was this 1920's period of KPH history that seems to hold the most nostalgia for the old timers. The bare mention of its sulphur and brimstone spark emissions still brings feeble cries of recognition from those of us who now go down to the sea in wheel-chairs. But this so-called "Bronze Age" ended with the world shaking explosions of Pearl Harbor. KPH and all other commercial stations were shut down. (This story, as told by "FG", himself will properly appear later).

After World War II, wealthy, successful RCA, who had always assumed that its connection with KPH had been a liaison of lucky convenience in its youth, now found itself in a shotgun wedding supervised by the grim faced FCC. Shy, haggard-toothed KPH, still wearing the Charleston beaded

skirts of the 1920's, staggered forth from its retirement. The last of the big time spenders thereupon equipped it with a wheezing 1/2 KW generator. The receivers were moved into the lunch room of the company's Point-to-Point receiving station on Point Reyes Peninsula. Apparently no one realized the unique potential of KPH. True to its historic heritage it quickly regained its former vitality and once again went roaring out across the Pacific. Throughout the 1950's it steadily regained its former prestige. By 1969 it had become one of the most famous ship-to-shore stations in the world.

THE GOLDEN AGE

The 1960's decade was the "Golden Age" of KPH. Under the able guidance of Frank Geisel, and later, Bill Hayton, it reached its zenith of power and personnel. This particular period in its history is the purpose of this article.

Only by extravagant images can the dramatic and humorous personality of this remarkable station be shown. As always, its signals rode like ghost riders in the sky; but at the same time let us be reminded of the waggish little man in the Wizard of Oz who cranked out his huge voice from behind the scenes.

The "voice" was situated midway on the wind-swept Point Reyes Peninsula. Sea birds winged their way across the dunes, or came to rest on the high swinging aerial wires twanging in the salty breeze. These miles of complex directional antennas spread out like long legged beetles across the barren moors.

A two-story square structure loomed its white walls above a grove of trees. Out of its fog-streaked windows there issued all manner of squeaks and squawks representing a multitude of telegraphic voices from every quarter of the globe. This box-like castle in the wilderness seemed to prove that man's inertistic imagination could be raised anywhere, as long as it was practical. Or, perhaps wisely, it simply abandoned any effort to compete with nature. Had it been anything but a boiler factory for brass pounding monkeys it would have long since been condemned.

Across its bland forefront was uninformedly written the ubiquitous "R C A COMMUNICATIONS INC"; there was no mention that it also housed the famous KPH. Or perhaps the eastern potentates thought that none but hairy hayseeds ever wandered through its cow speckled environment. The surrounding countryside, a U.S. Government National Conservation Reserve, consisted of a few sprawling dairy farms and rugged terrain filled with deer and small wild life.

The roadway leading outward from KPH toward the county highway passed through an imposing tunnel of

THE "WIRELESS PIONEER"

← RCA BOLINAS, CALIF. STATION - 1963

Unusual Aerial View of the Coastline looking Northward with the high-power station at Bolinas in the immediate foreground (A), and KPH near upper center (B) of photo. Picture from collection of SWP Member - HEDLEY B. MORRIS (195-P) assigned Bolinas and Kahuku 1920's and later Engineer-in-Charge. Due to altitude of plane the antenna-farm does not show up well in foreground but the control station is quite visible as well as the alternator/dynamo building near beach.

thickly bordering trees whose cathedral bows formed an archway a quarter of a mile in extent. After darkness the off-going watch drove through this mid-night cavern. Frequently the beams of the headlights revealed a huge grey owl soaring slowly ahead with heavy rhythmic and powerful wings as it led the way, like a ceremonial philosopher from the ruins of Thebes.

Those who are overly impressed by its solitude say galleons stand off the seacoast and that ghosts travel up and down the road leading through the remote Point Reyes Peninsula. If this is so they have been in good company for within-in the box-like castle sat Frank Geisel and his "Nine old men" (a term once coined by an irate Matson Chief operator). But for countless years these knights of the KPH round table battled the world airways. In customary language they handled ship-to-shore marine traffic, not only in the Pacific, but throughout the seven seas. As the number of working frequencies increased so did the Nine Old Men. In one crowded room there was assembled the finest group of marauders, pirates, and big-eared radio operators that the radio world has ever seen.

Here were men of great skill battling for the capture of world-wide radio traffic — not particularly for the profit of the company, but for the thundering challenge of the game. Throughout the radio profession it was a badge of honor to have duelled and survived its incredible rigors. Any man who, even temporarily, had sat at the controls, the massive array of toggle switches, banks of receivers, the blinking lights, and the screaming scanner, wore the badge of his experience as though he had once stood at the gates of Thermopylae.

Many a deep sea operator wondered what it was made of and what manner of men sat carousing at its round table. A visitor, during the 1960's, would have seen five working positions circled around the room. They covered 6, 8, 12, 16, 22mhz, and one shaggy trapping for the man on 500 kc (called 600 meters by the crutch and wheel-chair set). Each was equipped with a bank of four receivers. Mixed and split headphones was the rule.

THE DEN OF THIEVES

Occasionally formal visitors were ushered in expecting to view an efficient mechanized science-fiction array of sophisticated equipment manned by thoughtful looking men in long white coats. Instead they found themselves suddenly thrust into an 18th century den of thieves, all dressed like something out of the lower pages of Charles Dickens. The shrieking scanner and the pyramid-message-rack karate-kicked by leaping operators wearing horned headphones was as startling as the shouting manager waving his cane and trying profanely to break up the fighting between two operators, sometimes three, who had unhappily all seized upon the same ship.

To prevent missing a call from the deep, the automatic scanner, piped in from upstairs, rotated through three receivers. At full volume its ban-shee screams rose and fell like all the fiends and demons from the bottomless pit. To boost this pandemonium there were also three small speakers that could be added, at each position. During the "Observer" period it sounded like all the trumpets of hell were calling at the same time. As each operator, with Bonzae-like cries, leaped savagely upon the rotating message rack, he tore out the message for his captured ship, while the vibrating visitor stared with unbelieving eyes. (Eventually he would make his escape through the tunnel of trees, looking back to see if he was



FRANK GEISEL

SWP MEMBER "5-P" Frank was one of the Society's Organizers and its Second President. First Assignment on the SS SPOKANE/WGE 1919. Sent SOS from MULTINOMAH in August 1921. Assigned KPH in July 1926, he spent 17 years as operator (2 years MRI RCA S.F.) then 22 years as MANAGER of Station KPH. (Mr. "KPH")

still pursued by the Frankenstein machinery of KPH).

The manually rotated message rack, shaped somewhat like a pyramid, was a home-made device constructed by the maintenance staff. Like the first wheel its primitive value was incalculable. It contained all outgoing ship traffic alphabetically arranged in rows of slotted apertures, revealing at a glance the call signs on the traffic list. It was stacked by the teletype men, primarily Jack Martini who, like a man tossing confetti, festooned its sloping sides with the rapid strokes of an artist. Sometimes, with the collision of leaping operators, an important ship diversion message wound up in the dead files, to be discovered hours later. This contained all the embarrassment of a man who, jumping out of a plane, finds that he has forgotten his parachute! When "FG" was informed, he stood in the middle of the room leaning on his cane and staring with pale and stony face at the floor. Then he would take the fatal msg into his office, close the glass door, and could be seen crying on the telephone as he reasoned with the livid representative of the steamship company. Meanwhile the hang-dog crew sat in guilty silence, hoping that with time even this would be forgotten. But through sunshine and rain the identifying V-belt signing KPH, continued to roll.

This heart-beat of KPH, this continuous V-belt, was actuated by a scarred and beaten up Boehme keying head which they say once belonged to Sir Francis Drake — an unlikely story told by those who still believe they hear the voices of Drake's men out on the dunes on a windy night, especially during the season of Christmas cheer. The rotating belt transmitted 24 hours a day, "V V V DE KPH KPH KPH...." It circled the known world. Every shipboard operator since the beginning of radio time has picked it up on his stethoscope. But it was the man behind this machine which gave it the feeling of coming from the land of OZ.



MR. K.P.H.

In the center of the operating room Frank Geisel (FG) leaned on his sabre like a General surveying the field of battle. He was known throughout the radio world as "Mister KPH". Reportedly he chose his men like a pirate chief selecting his one-eyed and pegged legged crew. Occasionally he shouted encouragement, or roared in pain. He was deeply admired and respected not only for his professional ability, but for his man-to-man honesty, and additionally for his wild sense of humor. (He went around collecting cartoons by his disciples, even those of himself, with gloating enthusiasm.) He boasted that his men were the finest in the business and defended their transgressions with expedient logic, for they not only allegedly confiscated traffic from competing shore stations, but stole ships from one another for the sheer joy of it all. They would have cut the throat of the company itself had the opportunity presented itself, without damage to their generalissimo.

ROLL CALL

Throughout the history of this station there have been a series of unusual talented people. The list is long and impressive with the legendary Dick Johnstone leading all the rest. There was the incredible Rudy Asplund, and "Under the Ice" Ray Meyers. To name but a few is to neglect so many outstanding men of the profession. It is hoped that an authoritative source like Frank Geisel will compile the roster. Perhaps a sequel can be written on the ancient and medieval age of KPH. I might add my own personal friends of yesterday such as the retired farmer George Wood, my brother Bob Simpson, and the memorable Syd Blank, writer, bon vivant, philosopher, and intellectual poet.

But some of the KPH pirates would be difficult to describe, as FG admitted. What would you say about one bug artist who occasionally showed up for work dressed as a French Foreign Legionnaire including a Kepi with drape over his neck to keep off the flies, and bicycle clips on his pants to discourage sand fleas. Maybe now it would be in tune with the times, but in those days it was considered somewhat different. Or how about the man who fished in Drakes Bay on his way to work. His lunch consisted of a few choice and slimy denizon which he cooked on the coffee hot-plate. It took a sturdy pirate crew to continue the battle through the crackle and smell of frying octupii!

The long roll-call of by-gone years is a fit subject for SWP research; to be arranged and played like something out of Lawrence Welk. But during my short eight-year stretch there were men like Bill Meloney, one of the most fantastic professional operators of modern times that I have ever seen (and I have worked in Eastern stations that contained such men as Joe Chaplin, one time world champion). There was Rhio Blair the radio operator's radio operator; Earl Brand who was on a first name basis with every shipboard operator from Oslo to Chichiboo; Ray Smith the thoughtful hunter from the hills of Petaluma; Bill Gibbons the fisherman of both air and sea; Fred Baxter who had an outside enterprise of shipping tons of scrap metal to his business associates in Manila; Albano Leal the Brazilian of quiet courtesy who frequently siestaed himself into a position where he could be easily robbed; "OZ" White, the former stock broker whose piratical skill could best be fulfilled at KPH; Gaylord Walgren the old time philosopher.

There was George (Cannon-ball) Stokely whose con-

versation consisted of an explosive series of shouts. He was the Don Rickles of the crew. There was no profane insult too large or too small for his friendly greeting. At midnight he came in like a lion, but went out like a lamb at 8 AM.

In the time of his supremacy there was the incomparable magician Arnold Hansen. He cruised the airways like a ghost. With what seemed like spirit-rapping, or ESP, he drew forth from the black hat of eternity fat little rabbits that none of us would have ever found.

"HIZ" Zimmer, now retired. He was the one who labelled me the "Silver Fox." Long after I had seized his ship and was devouring it word for word across the room he would let out a roar, "Who stole my ship! Where is he? If I find him I will kill him!" Tethered to his position by the slim cord of his headphones he would rise like King Kong to glower around the room in search of the poacher. A former prize-fighter in his youth the situation was always precarious for someone my size.

And then, of course, Les Burger! The intellectual gentleman from Inverness, the Don Quixote of the airways, the man who fought windmills with his violin case. On his first day in the saddle he accidentally lassoed a ship I had already engaged in combat. With a shrill cry I leaped to my feet and challenged him to a duel. Jack Martini, the great pacifier of all things accidental, rushed in on his white horse and calmed the situation. Unfortunately I had thought this upstart newcomer was deliberately trying to top my reputation as a first class thief. With apologies I have regretted it ever since.

With my amplified version of various crew members it is only fair to include myself. Like the confessions of a reformed Watergate plumber I tell my listeners the somewhat embellished exploits of thieving and robbing my way around the aerial globe -- or Global Communications, as RCA calls it. The delightful carnage of KPH stood out from the



1964 - FRED BAXTER "BX"

"Holds Down" the H/F Operating position at 'K P H'
(One of Several)



600 METERS

"K P H" - 300 FT. VERTICAL RADIATOR 500/426 KHz
TRANSMITTER. POWER 20 KW. GUY WIRES COM-
PRISE EMERGENCY TRANSMITTER ANTENNA, 1/2 KW.

ordinary drudgery of "brass pounding". It held me in its magic spell for eight years.

As "RH" once said after one of the Observer Period battles, "The thing about you is that you look so innocent!" If I had been born with a glass eye, a one-sided lip, and a slight ticking motion of my head, I would have enjoyed the high esteem that comes to an honest rip-off man at KPH. I tried to keep my light fingered operations along the lines of a Gentleman Jim, which no doubt caused me to be called the Silver Fox. But I never robbed a man I didn't like.

Among the great hunters of the mid-watch were men like Earle Foster, veteran Chief Operator of transatlantic passenger liners. He gave a certain cool dignity to the profession. His operating technique was one of easy precision, effortless and with the authoritative politeness of a genie from an Arabian Nights bottle. Summoned forth he rose to answer the magic call with the booming voice of KPH.

One of the most skillful and scarlet swordsmen was Rhio (Borealis) Blair. He had a particular method of kidding us. Whenever the word "Alaska" was said out loud he leaped to his feet, saluted, and demanded a moment of silence for the holy land. Rumor had it that he had been sired by malemites and trained by polar bears. Not to stand at attention with him would have seemed irreverent. One boorish blackguard once suggested that his gospel word should be shouted at the peak of the Observer Roundup. But this would have been unclean — about on par with sending a mag on tape instead of a bug.

TAPE HOLE CHIPS

I once committed this malpractice. Being a veteran point-to-point man I sent a msg on tape. I

diabolically placed the head of a particularly overbearing and offensive Matson ship inside the iron maiden and gave the big squeeze. He came out like last week's laundry, starched and clean, but full of holes. But my victory was greeted with silence. I was given the black spot and shunned for weeks. It was as though I had scattered offal on the walls of the temple. My only defense was that I had spent years with Press Wireless, and Mackay "HB", not to mention a few million Boehme words at NPG. Only an old time Tape man with tape-hole chips in his veins can understand my lapse into original Sin. In the world of "Bugs" only the voice of the bugs is heard throughout the land.

One of the incomparable bug artists was Ray Smith, a man of wide and varied interests. He dotted his "i's" and crossed his "t's" with meticulous care. There was one trying time when he experimented, with great enjoyment, in calling people by their reversed names. Bill, for example, became "Llib", Jack was sounded as "Kaj", and Phil as "Lip". He, himself, was "Yar Htims". As it has been pointed out, KPH contained variety.

One day "Yar Htims" came over and stood behind me while I was digesting a fat Japanese cat, "I will give you one of my trade secrets," he said in a moment of rash benevolence, "If you flip the xmitter toggle switches with your left hand instead of your right, you will gain that one particular split hair on the hoary head of time — you know, the one that makes all the difference between petty larceny and hauling off the whole bag."

I was astonished because I had recently been reading about how Astrology could reveal a person's traits by the date of his birth.

"Aha! You were born in the month of September," I said triumphantly, Right?

"How did you know that?" he gasped.

"Well, according to the book you Virgo people minutely subtract, divide, bisect, and flip switches with your left hand, all at the same time, and then go back and critically examine every detail."

"My god!" he said and staggered back to his section of the Celestial quarterdeck.

In the long haul, over the years, the heir to the crown of seniority, as well as craftsmanship, was Bill Meloney. An educated gentleman he sat in the arena with the apologetic demeanor of a lion among the scattered bones of KPH history. By a mixture of metaphors he might be described as a reincarnation of Sir Francis Drake. Here was a man who could turn the tide of battle from defeat to cool victory, and at the same time tell you the relayed price of Yiddish (or Esperanto) to Port Said, or from Cable-Town Ireland. He quoted FCC Rules and Regs with quiet authority. He was so cool they say his blood pressure only rose to normal on the day he was confronted by a ship with 45 "Gfts" in its teeth. Like Jack Martini he could have been a success in any field of honest endeavor.

Jack (Noshe Dayon) Martini, and Phil Diehl were the first teletype men, per se, at KPH. They brought dynamic youth and new blood into the ranks of battle scarred warriors. Later they were followed by others as the traffic grew heavier and heavier. But Jack was the original whirling dervish. He circled the round table bringing aid and comfort to the dead and dying.

He catapulted from floor to ceiling, from teletype to teletype, and soared across the stage with the ease of a Bolshoi ballet, bearing urgent tidings in his teeth. (And through it all the great director, the old man of the sea, Mr. KPH himself, waved his cane to and fro as he conducted his Rolling Stones orchestra.)

Phil Diehl, a former radioman in the Coast Guard, later converted his status to radio operator. At first he was virtually decapitated but managed to survive. In no time at all he rose to undisciplined fame and stood upon the ramparts covered with blood from head to foot, but happy.

It would seem that with the urgent business of KPH there would be no time for foolery. But how could the high tension be endured except by the release of uproarious good humor during the idle periods of swapping scalps, or the "I knew him when" remarks concerning well known radio operators.

LEGENDARY BLOOPERS

There were such stories as the time a Honolulu Company ordered 15,000 rolls of toilet paper, and somehow the message was sent as 15,000 cases! In due time a whole shipload of toilet paper arrived to assuage the fears of our little Kanaka brothers. The irate company sued and RCA found itself in the business of peddling bathroom tissue at any price.

Then there was the story (attributed to RH Blair) that a remote radio station in Alaska sent a msg to its owners in Seattle, "Found a lion under the building in a weakened condition. Advise procedure." It should have read "Foundation under building in a weakened condition. Advise...." The recipient probably called up the Zoo for advice.

Another story was about the captain who received a triumphant message from his wife, "I am entertaining as always." Since the marriage was on the verge of splitting the captain ordered full speed ahead. The message should have read "I am at Interim Inn Stop As always."

There is also the one where the startled customer opened up his bright red RCA envelope and read, "Found brown cow in car. Shall I send it?" The word "cow" should have been coat. The last two letters were sent as "w" by the bug artist.

In contrast to this genial interpretation of the high tension work at KPH, death, directly or indirectly, took its toll. I remember Wally Gilbert who had come to our station after years at sea. He signed off the log one midnight and died on the way home. There was the well known Earl Brand, and others that FG could name over the years.

Full many a deep sea radio officer quit KPH after a few weeks of exhausting try-out, for fear of either having a heart attack, becoming totally deaf, or losing his mind. It took an iron man, a very special kind of man, to endure the gruelling, whip-lash rigors of working ship after ship in an endless procession from the Seven Seas. As old age creeps upon the armor-clad survivors the communication satellites will eventually take over and they will be forgotten. But perhaps someone might want to know -- like one of the huge corporation's vice presidents who asked (when told in 1968 that his men had gone out on strike) "KPH? Who is KPH?"

Among those who died in the saddle I remember Walt

Leahy. He was a tremendous and ruthless operator. He gave us all some of the most slashing competition we had ever encountered. He was like a voracious buccaneer searching the airways with savage skill. He prowled through the band and leaped his prey before the rest of us could flip a claw. Whenever he arrived to relieve the watch he leaned his great hulk against the doorway and circling his middle finger aloft he would boom, "Okay you idiots, you sheet house gang of thieves, you can all go home now!" And it might have been so, for here was the most savage master of the technique that I have ever seen. His passing was that of a Viking. Walt is gone now, but somewhere out beyond the heavyside layer his signals are still weaving in and out and around the sounds of ships long since lost and moving together through space toward eternity.

During one chaotic period in the early 1960's all operators covered all frequencies at the same time. In this way there seldom was heard a discouraging word by ships claiming to be neglected. Pandemonium reigned supreme. He might have been cut to pieces, steam-rollered, or handcuffed to an "Up" frequency during the snarling, snapping blitz that followed his call, but in the end his msg-scalp lay drying in the old bucket.

In those days of one for all and all for one the men telegraphically circled the aerial fires like plumed Indians working themselves into a sort of head-hunting ferocity. The spikes protruding from each side of a man's headphones gave the appearance of cloven-hoofed vitality. Albano Leal heightened the effect with a tall feather permanently attached to the top bar of his head piece. He kept it there for years. In addition to this, visitors were equally astonished by the sight of one of the inmates charging the mag rack like a mad dog shouting, "I've got him!" and whipping it out seconds before someone else.

The ships that poured through the horn of KPH came from every nation in the world. There were the Japanese who spoke like trained automatons; the suspicious French; the Greeks who chattered like magpies; the heavy Germans who never exchanged



LESTER R. "LES" BURGER

SWP - 256-V

1964 - ONE OF THE H/F POSITIONS AT "KPH"



KPH - 1964. Partial view of operating room. Foreground Sr. Teletype Opr. Jack Martini "DM", At Left R/O Bill Meloney "WM" SWP-300PA, At 500 Khz Position, Left (back turned) Les Burger "LR" SWP-256V; L/R. R/O Fred Baxter "BX" and R/O Joel Medina - "JM"

Picture furnished by Frank Geisel.

Yankee wise cracks; and the friendly English operators with the convivial "Jolly well right.... I say old man, you Yanks have really got it...."

KEY -- THE DENOMINATOR

A telegraph key reveals a person's traits and personality with considerable accuracy. More so than the human voice which is often cultivated to project an image. Perhaps that is what makes all the difference between radio telegraph communication and the mechanical teletype, or satellite automation. A KPH bushwacker knows his adversary the minute he locks horns. A good man can make his bug snap, snarl, engage in camaraderie, or float with musical cadence. He is not only a musician but an artist who creates as he goes along. The mistaken idea that radiotelephone could substitute the massive traffic moved by the speed and accuracy of a clean honed bug has bogged down many a so-called "modernized" system. A good example is the Navy ship-to-shore frequency which sounds like the Tower of Babel. The confusion of phonetic spelling, the "I say again's," "I spell Charlie Able Tango," or "Say all after,." By the time a 10 word msg is officially transmitted it has taken 10 minutes. A bug would have cleared it in one. The North Korean capture of the Pueblo was caused by the mechanized inability to communicate with the Naval Operating Base. Even a 5 WPM amateur novice could have done better. Lack of speed does not mean lack of accuracy, as illustrated by operators on Norwegian ships.

About 1966, we at KPH, suddenly became aware that many of the Norwegian ships employed girl radio officers. Somehow the feminine touch does not come out well on a telegraph key. It sounds like a pigeon-toed chicken crossing the road. There seems to be a certain awkwardness as though the little lady was chopping wood, or firing a pistol with her eyes closed. (With apologies to "Women's Lib"). On the other hand there is nothing more delightful than to find yourself suddenly hauling in a blonde goddess from the deeps, in-

stead of the usual denizen of shellbacks. Without exception they had real charm. You can put a woman in a sack, or on the end of a telegraph key and her eternal femininity comes through. When asked such dog-eared things as, "What is a nice girl like you doing in an ocean like this?" their joyous response was heart warming. When accused of probably being fair, fat and 60, they sent in photos of themselves which exposed the error of our ways for all time. Needless to say when one of this Nordic seraphs began clumsily calling KPH she got better service than the Queen Mary. We received letters from them in ports of the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Ocean. Each one named KPH as their most favored station in the worldwide system of shore stations. And when they married they wrote to poppa KPH to announce their happiness.

A recent photostat of an article "The Glorious Days at Old 'PH'" taken from the February 1917 edition of the "Pacific Radio News" was forwarded to me by Frank Geisel. It is amazing to read that even in those days of antiquity there were such comments as "The station made a name for itself that will go down forever in the history of Wireless." Yet this present article proposes that the true zenith of its greatness took place in the piratical era of the 1960's. Surprisingly the article goes on to show the great good humor of the quips and poetry written by the men of the green eyeshades and gartered sleeves. But it would seem this tradition also reached its peak in the 1960's with its extravagant mass of cartoons.

During the 1960's there were cut-out caricatures by the dozens constructed to show the daily encounters and battles of KPH. These cartoons filled up two large scrapbooks. They showed every operator in some particular moment of victory or defeat. They illustrated various ship-board radio officers in three-cornered hats waving sabres or kicking a dog labelled "KPH". There were men on horseback, front and back in futuristic patterns. There were scenes of apes arriving to relieve the mid-watch. The annual RCA picnic, usually a dull affair, was once satirized by a clipping from a Nudist Magazine which showed two bushy, middle-aged ladies in the nude standing behind the table for admissions. The applicant, a shy young man obviously from KPH, is writing down his name while one of the amply endowed swinging matrons is saying, "Of course RCA picnics are fun!"

MARCH OF THE IDIOTS

Then there was that awful period when the prevailing game was to stealthily fasten candidly worded signs on some innocent's back. This lapse into juvenile delight was developed into a technical skill beyond ordinary human capacity. The most elaborate devices were engineered with the improvised instruments of blow guns and long collapsible rods. In addition it was nothing unusual to see the cabinet door underneath an operating position slowly open and a hand and arm come out and attach a pair of cardboard wings to the heels of the busy operator.

It reached a point where a visitor would tip-toe into the room, look cautiously around at the ship-to-shore activity, then make his exit, convinced that he had been entirely unnoticed — but as he turned to go there would have been someone to clumsily stumble in his way, a brief apology, and as the victim passed down the hall there would be a small sign "Thanks for coming," firmly glued to his back.

A good KPH operator kept a hidden stack of cut-outs

and a variety of adhesives in his invisible archives. He also became expert at working with one hand behind his back. With the zeal of the proverbial one-armed paper hanger he learned to ward off aerial attacks from both inside and outside the room. But some were less adept than others. It was once reliably reported that one victim was seen shopping in a Petaluma grocery store still unaware of the cardboard shoulder ornaments of an admiral — and with wings on his heels!

Whenever the technician Dudley came in with a ladder to replace a ceiling light he advanced into the center of the room with Viet Cong caution. With each man locked in combat with the ships of the Seven Seas it seemed impossible that anything could happen. But by the time he was trudging down the hall with his ladder under his arm his back looked like the Travel Section of the Sunday Examiner.

Troy Everhart, in charge of building maintenance and considered a dangerous man to fool with, occasionally stalked imperiously into the room. He would stare at each of the inmates with a marble eye and sniff the air. Then with the dignity of a Saudi Arabian gas pump attendant he would retire. Five minutes later he would be crashing into the room with a mighty roar, holding up a sign "CHICKEN". "Who done that?" he would shout, looking directly at me. And everyone in the room would look at me and nod their heads wisely and sadly. I had not been within 15 feet of the victim, but, as someone said, "That's all it takes for him."

THE FLIP SIDE

Once, an adventurous young lady from the main office in San Francisco, having heard that no one escaped unscathed from the KPH den of sharks, had the temerity to arrive for a visit. With self-conscious arched eyebrows she circled the room holding her skirts with what she thought was unobservable modesty. (God knows what could happen in a place like this.) But the monsters of the deep were gentlemen. They only flicked a smile of admiration here and there, and went back to work. "Thank you, thank you," she said as she backed out the door. When she arrived triumphantly at her office there was glued to her back "You should see the flip side," and another sign under her arm which read, "Beautiful but dumb." But that was not all the story for the next day she furiously returned, stuck only her head through the door and shouted, "OK you guys, thanks a lot!"

Somehow I seemed to have been accused of performing many of these elaborate stunts, but it is not true. There were others far more adept than I. For example, Bill Meloney was a consummate artist beyond description. He was the master of the aerial attack. By simply wiping his brow and snapping his hand an insulting sign would simultaneously appear on some innocent passing by.

Phil Diehl studied his victims for days before launching a campaign. He was a tunneler. It was he who excavated a passageway underneath the enclosed tables between positions. Had he been a wartime prisoner he would have escaped through a drain pipe of the local bastille. His natural talents were the pride of KPH.

Whereas most large corporations strive to impersonalize their employees this was not true at KPH. From about 1914 onward every man was his own hunter of the "Red Baron." He spent his spare time getting revved up for the main event. Ap-

parently it worked very well, for today KPH is the sole surviving station of its kind in the Western United States. There are no more competitors.

The success of this Flying Escadrille, in the middle and final years, was under the direction of two remarkable men — Frank Geisel and Bill Hayton.

Frank, as has been pointed out, ran the business like a virtuoso, but with the practical application of old time remedies — a bit of static here, and a swift change in the watch-list there. Since most radio ops are notoriously free agents running the place was like holding a seance in a nut house. The barmy atmosphere which began in the 1926 days of Cpt. Whiz Bang, continued through the "let is all hang out" period of the '60's.

OLD CURIOSITY SHOP

Frank's office was sometimes referred to as The Old Curiosity Shop. On the shelves were ancient volumes of forgotten lore such as Bucher's Practical Wireless Telegraphy on spark transmitters, a 1912 Funk & Wagnalls dictionary, and a dozen or so unwrapped packages from the FCC. The closet had no shelves, but bulged with secret weapons and forgotten screwdrivers. When the door opened mice plunged out into the blinding sunlight and the intruder found himself ensnared in the grip of broom-handles and coils of #10 copper wire.

After Frank's retirement Bill Hayton took over the office and kept the faith, that is, knee deep in unanswered mail. All the old traditions remained unchanged except that on the door was hung a sign, "The Doctor is In" (or Out). Cautious visitors came and went, the roar of signals rose and fell, and the traffic list stretched longer and longer. The calling ships came not singly,



BADGE OF EXCELLENCE

"KEY ARTISTS" on the Day Watch at KPH 1966.

Front Row (L/R): Jack Marrini "DM"; Warren Simpson "SI" 26-P; Bill Meloney "WM" SWP-300-PA.

Rear: Les Burger "LR" SWP-256-V; Walt Leahy "WL" Silent Key); Frank Geisel "FG" SWP-5P; Ray Smith "RC" 374-PA.

Photo from collection of Frank Geisel

but in battalions, like invading hordes sweeping in from all points of the globe.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the radio forest, that magnificent giant of a competitor, KFS, was beginning to stagger -- not from the effects of the age old battle, but from the fact that the rug had been pulled out from under it by its own grandmother busily bartering million dollar knick-knacks in the eastern market place. To make matters worse, Eb Cady, long-time manager, stepped down upon reaching the automatic age of retirement. After him came my old friend from Press Wireless, Dalton Bergstedt, who led the last charge of the iron horsemen of KFS.

The age of wireless telegraphy still has hundreds of dramatic stories yet to be told in coming issues of "SPARKS" by the men who manned the keys to the ionosphere. It was the mid-watch that was noted for its long distance records, even from as far back as the old Spark Days. Here in the dark hours of the night the men, earphoned and silent, sat before the flickering dial lights, cruising the bat-winged bands, searching slowly back and forth for the distant sound, the far horn on the earth's perimeters. These were the hours of unfolding dramas of distress, the mutinies of the high seas, the typhoons and gales, and the faint far cry beneath the rumbling static-layer of atmosphere.

Perhaps one of the most stimulating circuits at KPH was the 22 mhz frequency. One touch of the key and it circled the world and turned up ships that had been "dark" for weeks. Sometimes the lucky connection would last only a few minutes. The urgent exchange would be broken by the rising sun which would shift the ionized layer and the ship might never connect again. The following excerpt from a poem by W.G.S. is a dramatized version of his memory of "The Magic 22":

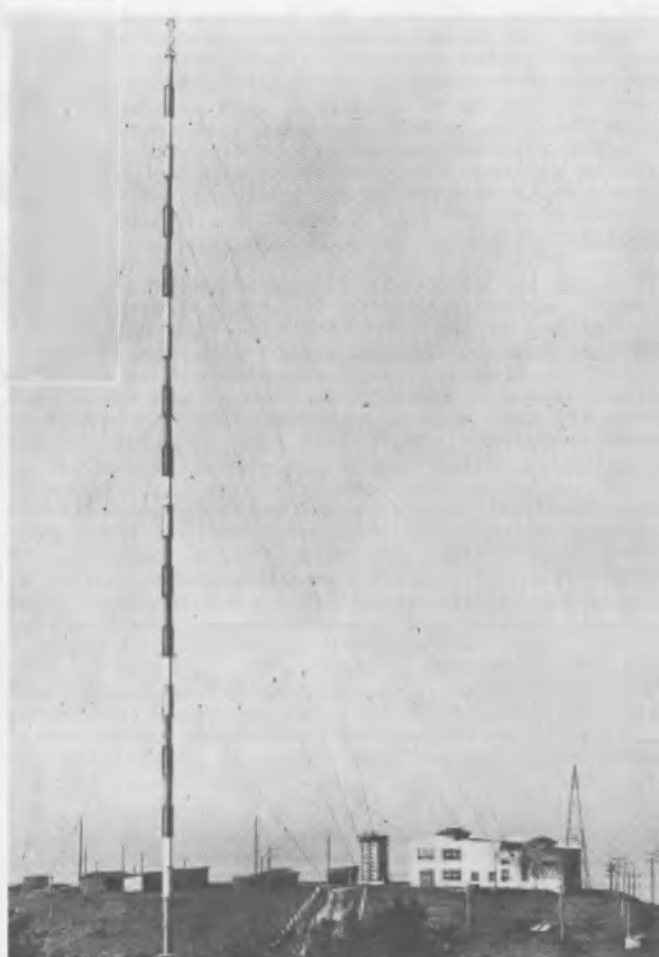
.... beyond the poles
The ship has heard my key unlock
The universe and we connect
A message through the floating spheres
Until the mounting sun
Shrinks the signal into echoed mist,
And once again, a rainbow
Made of letter "V"s
Bestrides the globe like a colossus
Signing K-P-H,
Fleeting as the speed of light
And sprung by clouds of antelopes
Racing in

From the rim of distant seas.

The day that KPH is replaced by an "Earth Station" will be a sad one. The memory of its unique experience in the history of radio telegraphy will no doubt be lost to a new generation of push button automation. But perhaps there is some satisfaction in imagining that all the radio signals that each of us sent forth are still out there traveling through quasar time, a primitive raucous collection of KPH banditti hurtling past unknown and startled worlds. These truly were, and still are, the ghost riders of the sky.

Today KPH stands alone at the gates of the Pacific. Almost all of the competing stations who fought the wars of the '60's are gone. Like Alexander the Great it lounges on the throne drinking wine and roses. There are no more worlds to conquer.

But rising on the far horizon is the form of an Earth Satellite. It casts a long shadow. The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away, for in a moment KPH will fall down and go B O O M (snap, crackle and pop) into history; and as a previous generation once said, "Good bye Old Paint."



BOLINAS TRANSMITTER STATION

ORIGINAL MARCONI BUILDING, ERECTED IN 1915. THIS BUILDING HOUSED THE ALEXANDERSON ALTERNATOR FOR POINT TO POINT USE. IT STILL HOUSES SOME OF THE "KPH" TRANSMITTERS.

Photo from collection of Frank Geisel



BOLINAS ANTENNA FARM

Photo from collection of Bill Breniman

"KUP"

HISTORICAL

NOTES FROM

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THE 'LOG' OF 'RON' MARTIN - W6ZF (RM)

Editor's Note.

One of the legendary radio stations of the Pacific Coast was "KUP" (formerly GARD). Operators the world over remember the fine 'fists' of "RM", "FB", "WW", "JY", "MB" and others who manned keys at this famous station. Ron Martin W6ZF recalls the days of "Skyway Robbery" when KPH or KFS tried to 'hook' every signal on the air, and KUP was in there pitching too. Of course these 'spin-offs' left no evidence - it was all part of the game - and today Messrs. Geisel, Martin and Cady are the best of friends ... but the game goes on with new players at the controls.

Station "KUP" was owned and operated by the San Francisco Examiner. Coverage by KUP was phenomenal. Even Station 'WHD' of the New York Times didn't get the coverage! KUP operated on 5 frequencies throughout the high frequency spectrum - covering the world with only 5 KW! RCA and Mackay used 20 KW, yet KUP many times took traffic out from under them. It was claimed by some, but without verification, that operators at KUP climbed the antenna towers and greased the skywires just so the signals would slide off better - especially to the South (WFA at Little America, etc.). Here is Ron Martin's story.

The press station was instigated in 1928 by Fred Roebuck, "FD", one of the greatest telegraph and radio operators of all times, fresh from his cruise on the Yacht Kaimaloha, KFUH, throughout the south seas. This occurred at the same time NRRL, the USS Seattle made her cruise to the Antipodes and pioneered short wave communications with the Navy. KFUH also had short wave aboard for the first time, a pair of UV-204A (250 watters) in the old famous Tuned Plate Tuned Grid self excited oscillator with 500 cycle power supply. It made renown communications at the same time as NRRL. We remember them well having worked them both! Fred Schnell was the operator on NRRL representing the ARRL... he is now retired and lives in Florida.

W6GM-W2GW, Howard Cookson was the second operator at KUP, then licensed as GARD, at the San Francisco Examiner, San Francisco. When he left the station shortly after it was opened, W6ZF, "RM", then GAYC took over the 2nd berth, and worked the night trick, sending press at 1 AM in the morning, on 6440 KCS. The note was 240 cycles and many will remember the "shut down" of the 240 cycle power supply alternator as the unit slowed down to stop as "RM" would send "GN and SK"..... This was characteristic of old KUP, nightly and after each schedule.

The transmitter at GARD-KUP was built by Heintz and Kaufman of San Francisco. It was a self excited oscillator Tuned Plate Tuned Grid transmitter running 2400 volts to a pair of UV-204A tubes. The unit was rated at 500 watts, but after having DeForest build us some specially constructed 204As the transmitter ran many hours at 2 KW input. The antenna system was a three-quarter wave length long wire for the lowest frequency with a one-quarter wave length of counterpoise.

It was approximately 160 feet high and those who copied KUP from various parts of the world can attest to the signals laid down everywhere.

The station grew in scheduling and also transmitter-wise. Several TPTG units were added and on other frequencies. Our compliment was 6440, 8320, 11370, 16640, and 22225 KCS. Many ships were worked on the old 36 meter band, in which we used 8320 KCS and gave special news items upon request, especially the running rounds of many of the famous boxing matches.

The schedules were as follows: (In the beginning, daily except Sundays)

1 AM (0900GMT) - Press, 20-22WPM, 6440 KCS
1 PM (2100GMT) - Press, 20-22WPM, 6440 KCS

As more operators were added, more schedules were set up as follows:

7 AM (1500GMT) - Press, 6440 and 11370 KCS
8 AM (1600GMT) - Weather, Coastal and Pacific, 6440 and 11370 KCS
1 PM (2100GMT) - Press, 11370 and 16640 KCS
4:30 PM (0030GMT) - Financial Survey, 6440, 11370 and 16640 KCS
7 PM (0300GMT) - Press, 6440, 11370 and 16640 KCS
8 PM (0400GMT) - Weather, Coastal and Pacific, 6440, 11370 KCS
9:30 PM (0530GMT) - Special Press for US Navy, at 35 WPM, 6440 and 11370 KCS
1 AM (0900GMT) - Press, 6440 and 11370 KCS
4:30 AM (1230GMT) - Stocks and Bond Quotations, 6440 KCS

This was a twenty-four hour operation around the clock with four operators on deck. "WW", Wes J. Wright held down the day trick, having come to the station from the SS City of Panama, relieving Oney Johnson, former Chief on the City of Panama, at KUP, who went to KPH for bigger glory. Wes was a methodical radio operator and noted for his steady fist, and rarely made a mistake in sending. He lived in San Francisco and still lives there in retirement from the San Francisco Police Department. He had a ham call at one time, 6HK.

The second trick was held down by "FB", Frank Button, fresh from the US Navy, his calls were 6DAU, formerly of San Diego, HUGEO of Honolulu, and today is WATV in Stuart, Florida. "FB" had the attribute of being able to send press for hours without making one single "bull" (mistake to most of you) and his press schedules were siphoned taped by the Navy and sent to us on many occasions. The sending was like what we call Wheatstone or Boelme tape! Perfect! Frank will be sixty-five in September and was visiting "RM" at the time of the reunion, having made the trip by auto and his "Leakoe-Teepee" trailer across the country. He carried his radio gear in his trailer and set it up each night to keep a schedule with W6ZF. It was like old times! The nightly "TR" showed his QTH after each days run. Frank is retired from the US Navy as a Lieutenant Senior Grade having come up from the ranks, in radio communications.

THE SOCIETY OF WIRELESS PIONEERS



W6ZF - "RM" and W4TV "FB" of 'K U P' FAME

Ron Martin (left) holding one of the old mercury rectifiers used at KUP (1928-1936) and Frank Dutton holding an 860 and UV204-A used in KUP Transmitters, Pix taken during KUP "Oldtimers" Reunion at "Rons" home in Napa, Calif. July 1972.

Phone - courtesy Ron Martin.

Third trick was taken over by "JY" Joey Raspiller of Berkeley, California. Joey today is with FAA and about to retire at Oakland. His fist was heard predominantly in the Orient, Indian Ocean and South Pacific. Ships in the Orient reported on many occasions their reception of "JY" and his press schedules when other stations from the U.S. could not be heard distinctly enough to copy on the mill. It is quite a chore to copy at 5000 miles and put it directly on a "stencil".... aboard a rolling ship! The operators of today do not know what a romance they have missed. Those were the days when Radio Operators were OPERATORS!

Relief operator at KUP was "MB", Mort Brewer, W6JU, who now resides in La Canada, California and is in television at Mt. Wilson. Mort was a young gentleman who probably loved radio more than anyone we have ever known. His fist was equally as excellent as his enthusiasm and even today it still can be likened to Boehme Tape sending. Once you have the "touch" you rarely ever lose it. It is an art not always mastered by everyone. It is said that good operators are not made... they are born! Mort was always available to take over the summer vacation schedules. And occasionally sat in on his own when he visited KUP.

Ron Martin, "RM" W6ZF (formerly 9HW, 9AHU, 6AYC, 6CFY, 6XG, 6ARD), has enjoyed over fifty-five years in radio. He is a charter member (Pioneer) of the Society of Wireless Pioneers, many years as a member of ARRL and many other organizations who have fostered Amateur Radio. He served ten years as Vice Director of the Pacific Division with the late Harry Engwicht, W6HC, who had been a close friend for over forty years. His pioneering events in radio communications read like a history book. He served twenty-five years with the U.S. Air Force and retired as a permanent grade Colonel, in 1967. "RM" lives with his wife in retirement in Napa, California. Although not one to gather moss in a rocking chair, he still enjoys working part time on the Public Relations Staff of the Christian Brothers Winery at St. Helena, California. "People are the greatest treasures on

Earth..." one can hear "RM" say often during the day, as he lectures on Napa Valley, Wines, Grape Vineyards, "Greystone Cellars" the largest stone winery in the world, the Christian Brothers and Champagnes.

W6ZF is active on most all ham bands, including 144 MCS Repeater operation with the Society of Amateur Radio Operators' repeater at Mt. Vaca.

His eight years at KUP as Chief and Superintendent, gained him many friends throughout the world as he administered KUP to its legendary spot in the communications world.

Two years ago in July 1972 former operators of KUP held a reunion at his home (40 years had drifted past). It may be many years or it may never happen again that the operators of old KUP will get together again... but it brought back nostalgia of the days of yester-years when radio operating really was in its glory, with such events as the Dole Air Race in 1927; the flight of the Southern Cross to Australia; with Byrd at the South Pole WFA at Little America; Sir Hubert Wilkins at the North Pole and South Antarctica with KDZ; round world flight of the Graf Zeppelin; the loss of the dirigible Shenandoah; Akron and Macon; many SOS's of ships at sea; and many hundreds of other events which KUP participated. Today KUP's transmitter (the old DeForest) has been given to the Perham Foundation Museum, in Palo Alto, for posterity. Her operators are now legend too!

COL. RONALD G. MARTIN, USAF, RETIRED

"Ron" Martins AMATEUR DAYS date back to 9HW & 9AHU in 1919. His COMMERCIAL DAYS started in 1924 with assignment to the SS JOHN STANTON/KDXT of the Pioneer S.S. Co. on the Great Lakes. He was with Dollar S.S. Co., on the President Garfield 1925-1928 and then Chief and General Manager of Station KUP of the Hearst Publications in S.F. from 1928-1936, thence to the USAF. SWP-81-P.



COMMERCIAL OPERATOR GOES AMATEUR

... and in a BIG WAY! Ron Martin W6ZF and his very professional looking Amateur Station - all shipshape and Bristol fashion. YES... There is an old RCA LF super-het 15-600 KCS just above the phone so he can tune in to ship traffic. Photo - Courtesy Ron Martin.

1896

RADIOGRAM

TROPICAL RADIO

TELEGRAPH COMPANY

OPERATING IN CONNECTION WITH



TRUXILLO RAILROAD COMPANY

Story of . . . TRT

By - M.G. 'Mel' Dobbs - 1360-V

The story of Tropical Radio dates back to the year of 1904. During the 1904 period reliable telegraphic and telephone communications between the United States and Central American countries were expedient, and although wireless communications as it was known in those days was in the infancy stage, plans to establish communications via wireless between the various ports centrally located in Central America and eventually the United States were on the drawing board.

One of the first ports to be considered for the installations of a wireless station was Bocas del Toro, Panama because messages directed to this port from the United States had to be telegraphed to Galveston, Texas thence via cable to San Juan del Sur, Nicaragua where the message was given to the Nicaraguan landlines, who in turn turned the message over to the Costa Rican landlines for transmission to Puerto Limon, Costa Rica. The message was then turned over to the natives who made the trip in a canoe on the open sea to Bocas del Toro in from 30 to 60 hours, depending on weather conditions.

In view of this, wireless station facilities were installed at Port Limon, Costa Rica and Bocas del Toro, Panama, and radio communications were inaugurated between these two points in 1905. The Bocas del Toro facility handled the telegraphic requirements for the general public until 1921 when the station was moved to Almirante, Panama, some few miles away.

In 1906 authority was given for the construction of wireless stations at Bluefields, Nicaragua and Rama, Nicaragua. These two stations handled the telegraphic needs of the general public between those two points, the United States and Europe.

In 1907 inasmuch the performance of the Bluefields, Rama, Port Limon and Bocas del Toro installations were beyond expectations, the consensus of opinion was that all of the Republics of Central America and Colombia, South America should have wireless communications with the United States, either direct or via relay. Also during that year authority was given to install wireless equipment on board various ships.

To establish communications between the United States and the tropics, Swan Island about one mile wide and two miles long in the Caribbean Sea, about nine hundred miles south of New Orleans was selected to be the relay point. A wireless station was also purchased in 1907 from the United Wireless Telegraph Company at New Orleans to the United States terminal of the radio system.

It was found that when favorable atmospheric conditions prevailed the Swan Island station could communicate with both New Orleans and Port Limon; however during adverse conditions, communications between New Orleans and Swan Island became difficult. To combat this a second relay wireless station was erected at Cape San Antonio, Cuba and was in operation in 1909. The Cape San Antonio station was quite helpful as a relay between New Orleans and Swan Island and played an important part in the United States-Central American communication system. In 1911 an additional wireless station was added to the system at Santa Marta, Colombia.

Subsequent installations followed at Barrios, Guatemala; Guatemala City, Guatemala; Tegucigalpa, Honduras; Managua, Nicaragua; Almirante, Panama; Panama City, Panama; San Jose, Costa Rica; Boston, Massachusetts; Hialeah, Florida (now Fort Lauderdale); Mobile, Alabama; Fort Morgan, Alabama and Burrwood, Louisiana. The New Orleans installation is now located in the Slidell/Pearl River area.

During those days radical improvements came almost overnight and Tropical Radio kept in stride with the latest innovations to improve communications over its entire system. And with the discovery of high frequency (short wave) during the latter 1920's, Tropical Radio was able to communicate direct with its counterparts in Central America, South America and ships at sea with very little difficulty. This permitted the closing of the Swan Island facility. The Cape San Antonio, Cuba facility was destroyed by a severe hurricane in 1915 and never restored.

With increased technology and the birth of transistors which revolutionized wireless radio communications, Tropical Radio is in a position to serve the public with their communication needs whether it be telex, TWX, Dataphone and with its association with American Telephone and Telegraph offers telephone service to Central American points. Message service is provided with excellent elapsed time handling to all points in Central America, South America, the Caribbean area and ships at sea. Just recently a circuit from Panama City, Panama to Rome, Italy via satellite was inaugurated offering telex, message and telephone service from the tropics to points in Europe.

Our marine coastal stations at New Orleans and Miami are known the world over for providing excellent service on message exchanges between ships at sea and their shipping agents all over the world. Also for the free medical service provided for the benefit of ships not carrying doctors, and the weather and hurricane advisories broadcast free during the hurricane season.

Tropical Radio is also in the process of installing sophisticated equipment, placing it on a parallel or possibly above that of other communication carriers in this highly competitive field.

Throughout the years Tropical Radio is proud of their policy of carefully selecting personnel to provide the ultimate in versatility with only one objective in mind, that is to provide our customers with the service they desire.

Tropical Radio is proud of its accomplishments since 1904 and envision even greater achievements in the future.

SWR Member Merrill G. Dobbs was Inspector, Manager, Gen. Manager of TRT 1942-1960 and Supt./Manager TRT TELECOMMUNICATION CORP. 1960-1970. Recently retired. "Mel" sailed ships of THE GREAT WHITE FLEET for many years.

Half a Century Ago



on the Great Lakes

Reported by RALPH C. FOLKMAN

The ore carrier **CLETUS SCHNEIDER** (KNEO) was one of the first Great Lakes ships to convert from crystal to a small highly-regenerative tube receiver in 1921. With 45 volts on the plate, it worked nicely on receive - and with 135 volts, when keyed, made an excellent CW transmitter over fair distances.

Once, during a blinding snow storm on lake Superior, the operator put this to good use. He got compass bearings from Whitefish Point (NZT) when his ship's regular spark transmitter was in trouble. These bearings, at 15-minute intervals, finally put the vessel on a corrected course. Word of their plight, and the eventual aid by radio, reached the home office by way of the captain's report. The operator was cited for "a fine job" but he never did admit to accomplishing it with a receiver being used as a transmitter.

"They'd want an explanation regarding the inoperative spark transmitter," he whispered. "I'm still trying to convince the operator at Whitefish Point that we were working on a makeshift mouse-power 'transmitter' and that our ship is still officially on SPARK."



S.S. TIONESTA - WCA

Photo Courtesy of Dana Thomas Bowen - Author of Lake Books
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Photograph by
Ralph Folkman



COASTAL STATION "WTK" ATOP CLEVELAND HOTEL DURING 1920's. MAJOR LINE WITH GRAY AND ORE VESSELS AND PASSENGER SHIPS. ANTENNAS SUPPORTED BY HOTEL'S SIGN 20 STORIES ABOVE PUBLIC SQUARE.

For many years, early in the century, the SS CITY OF ERIE and her sister ship the SS CITY OF BUFFALO made opposite nightly runs between Cleveland and Buffalo, a distance of about 300 miles.

When head on, these ships could contact each other nicely with their quarter KW quench spark transmitters. But after passing each other about 2:20 A.M., things were radically different. Within an hour's time, stern-to-stern, there was little or no wireless contact.

About 1922, an enterprising operator experimented with radically new ideas in antenna design, including counterpoise instead of ground. Signals then were excellent "coming or going" - permitting the operators to breathe easier considering the frequent demands from their skippers for inter-ship messages.

In 1923, on the SS SEANBEE, the night operator tiptoed past a snoozing cook in the ship's galley to raid the big refrigerator for a snack. The heavy door swung shut behind him and the small light went out. By the time he was found he had almost contracted pneumonia and spent the next day under heavy blankets "thawing out" instead of going on shore leave.

Fifty years ago the operator on the SS STATE OF OHIO (WPR) was noted for his inventiveness in entertaining visitors to the wireless shack. Dave Stein would gather piles of dead insects (called Canadian Soldiers) that infested the decks on warm summer cruises. Stacking them high atop his transmitter's spark gap, he would magically disintegrate them into a whisp of blue smoke. Not even a cinder remained ... after he tapped the key.

TALES
OF THE WIRELESS PIONEERS



Another of his "tricks" with that spark involved an ungrounded "hot" guy wire fastened to a life-boat davit just outside his shack. Many a passenger got "tickled" with the surprising but harmless b-z-z-z-t off that cable.

They tell a story around the Great Lakes area about the Canadian operator who was being examined for a U.S. commercial license after becoming a citizen of this country. It was during the visit by the RI to the Old Postoffice in Cleveland in 1920.

All during the code test the Canadian sat with his arms folded. "Forgot to bring a pencil," he explained to the inspector when the test finished. "But if you'll loan me one I'll put down the copy."

Feeling this was very unorthodox, yet curious to witness the result, the inspector loaned him a pencil and waited while the operator scribbled away from memory.

Astonished after reading the copy, the RI exclaimed, "You have more than enough of the required test here, including four intentional mistakes that the machine made. If, for no other reason than your remarkable memory, I'll pass you."



TALES
OF THE WIRELESS PIONEERS

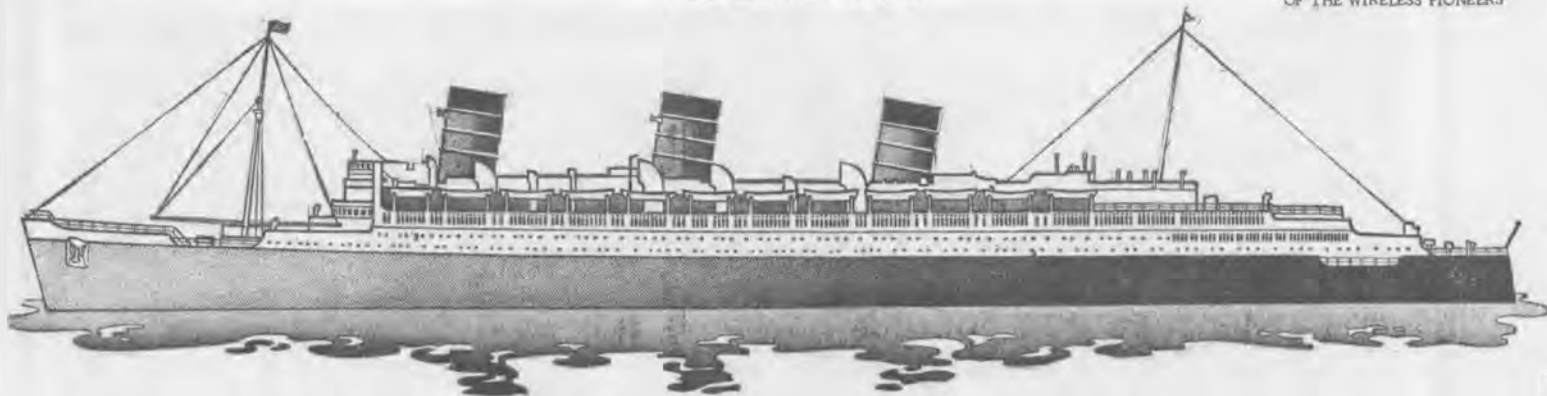
Our member Richard V. Cordo (TA-16) isn't too enthused about music from a car radio. But when it comes to commercial chatter on the marine frequencies, Dick's car is fully equipped. He covers all ship-to-shore and coastal station frequencies (AM and FM) while on trips to museums and antique marine dealers and collectors.

His accumulation of maritime gear includes just about everything from masthead lights, steam whistles, searchlights, compasses and chad-burns to twenty brass clocks from engine rooms and radio shacks, along with old ship logs and famous state-room keys.

THANKS RALPH . . .

Ralph C. Folkman - 58E-P, SWP AREA DIRECTOR, Great Lakes - His Cartoons are becoming a "Collector's Item" as he seems to have the 'knack' of recapturing much of the color of an era now far afield. We receive many letters expressing appreciation for these 'mirth-quakes'. We wish to thank RICHARD CORDO for pix of the SS NORTH AMERICAN shown above. Call "WEN". He has quite a library of Lake Ship pictures and nautical artifacts. He has indicated he will supply us with pix of interest for coming "SPARKS"





OF THE COMMERCIAL WIRELESS OPERATOR

By
**LESTER E.
BACHMAN**

This is a story of "wireless operators" - a breed of men, and sometimes women who, in their heyday - painted a vivid page in communications history before the more modern electronics equipment of recent years started taking over their work. While he was not the first of them, Jack Binns probably highlighted the beginning of this era when he flashed his famous QDQ distress signal from the sinking S.S. Republic off Nantucket Island shores in the first decade of this century. Radio teletypewriters, high powered radio telephones, satellite returns and other devices - all have made inroads on the profession - and while marine "brass pounding" is still quite common, the noted point-to-point circuits, the "mux" boys and the "boxcar" or Phillips Code jugglers are now in greater, if not indistinct, rarity.

While those in the trade talked a common language, some of their jobs were as different as day and night. The marine or seagoing radio operator, infested with a wanderlust, usually remained a marine operator. The inevitable girl may have put him on the beach, but there he strove to "twist dials" at the many shore stations in working ships on the high seas. He frequently worked in his choice with a single radio receiver, patiently enduring the occasional fading of radio signals and manually keyed or comparatively slow code speeds. The point-to-point man, on the other hand, played with automatic high speed code keying equipment and moved thousands of words per hour.

Although "Q" and "Z" codes were devised for international exchanges of intelligence or to cross language barriers and to shorten word action, the trade came up with another whole language more or less of its own. Some of it dated back to the railroad Morse men and the numbers or numerals code. More of it came from the professional press circuits or Phillips code - while still other sections were devised around the simplicity of certain letters or numerals that were easy to key in a few dots or dashes.

The effect of these codes within a code is still apparent as a carryover of today. How many times we have heard the newscaster - winding up his

story for the night - say "that is 30 for tonight" and we'll venture a good guess he couldn't quote the signal originated. Even the modern airways lighting beacon of the Federal airlines, flashing its coded course light signal, copied the shortened numerals from the collated keyings of the early Phillips Code. Dit Dah (A) for the numeral 1, Dit Dit Dah (U) for the numeral 2, etc.

More of the codes (within the Continental or International Morse codes) have been forgotten or fallen into disuse. Interrupted by other duties, the old time operator would ask the receiving station many miles away, "Where am I or where was I" in my transmission. To do it, he keyed the numeral "4" and the receiving operator, at the other end of the circuit, immediately transmitted the last word he had received correctly. In the same parlance, one T meant THE, two T's (TT) stood for THAT, three T's (TTT) for ATTENTION. One N meant NO, Two N's for NINE, three N's for NINETEEN. Simple, wasn't it?

The communications equipment of those early days necessitated short cuts. Railroad Morse men, to begin with, had no modern generators or usual power source - the energy came from batteries - and their acid mixtures were slow in mixing, messy, and mighty dangerous. So the operators said volumes of information with a brief numeral or two.

The period of Spark, Alternator and Arc radio transmitters continued with the habit of brevity. On shipboard or on the beach, power was still to be treasured. Transmissions were keyed slowly and anything that could therefore be shortened in the language was treated with early abbreviation.

Those were the days. While the modern radio tube transmitter now gives an impression of quiet, compact efficiency, not so the early arc equipment. Resembling the old fashioned schoolroom woodburning stove, it often sputtered, fumed and came close to representing a small version of Dante's inferno. It also frequently carried a pungent odor that reeked to high heavens. The early models burned raw alcohol dripping into a chamber enclosing the cathode and anode arc points. But a lot of the alcohol never found its way into the arc chamber, and ended up in a shorter circuit in the stomach of the tending wireless radio operator. That used to be quite a trick, to see how closely you could "wean the arc" and swear to superior officers its consumption was twice as much. Squeezing the alcohol too low often resulted in a "blowout" and relighting the arc in an already hot chamber had dire consequences. Something like refiring a hot oil furnace, with the door, gates and nearby

furniture sometimes flying in all directions.

Somewhere, a wise guy - probably responsible for financing - finally put an end to things and thus "pink lady" was born. It was a devilish mixture, looking something like heavy iodine, treated into every five gallon demijohn of what had previously been good radio arc transmitter and wireless operator food. Although we swore for a long time it wouldn't work, the stubborn radio arcs digested it far better than we did. Drink the pink-lady treated alcohol, and you were done. Vomiting, nausea, giddiness - eyes out of focus - and everyone on the ship knew what you had been up to. Shellac, of course, could be worked down through several loaves of bread with fair results of filtering. But the "pink lady" treated alcohol fared differently, and we finally gave it up as a losing battle.

Arc transmitters had a sound, in a receiver on the air, all of their own. On a quiet night they could be heard by ear in the transmitting building hundreds of yards away. The operator might be heard too, if the arc pot was burning with dirty results. A "dirty arc pot" and dirty language. Miles away, the receiving radio operator luckily heard only the dirty arc transmissions.

In the receiver, the arc signal carried a side or mush tone that was constant and often so loud it made the dots or dashes indistinguishable. They all operated on long wave or low frequency near or below 100 kilocycles and their best vantage point for copying was several hundred miles away where the side tones were more lessened. Aside from the merits of their alcohol, frequency stability was their only other asset. In thinking back, too, we occasionally wonder how all of us escaped holding a fireman's license.

Spark transmitters were in a class by themselves. They were forerunners, and were forgiven or cursed, depending on the circumstances, for a long time. In the first place, the amount of copper and brass in even a small half kilowatt rig could have piped a large share of the modern household. Most of them were mounted on heavy bakelite or solid marble stone panel racks, the "quenched" spark gap in the front where it could create more of a hazard. If it had a "rotary gap," the unit was often behind the rack. All of them employed a helix, or tapped inductance circuit consisting of yards and yards of heavy copper ribbon suspended near the ceiling. By tapping off various turns in the helix, the operator selected something near a wavelength. Actually, by today's standard, he occupied just about any space on the receiver dial every time the key was stepped on.

In the early models, control was achieved by directly "making and breaking" the primary winding of an Inductance coil, and for this reason the keys were fitted with very heavy contacts. Some of the keys hinged in the middle, some worked horizontally and others worked vertically. All of them were large and the countless shocks inadvertently received by the operators, especially on shipboard, led to various experiments for a key tip or handle providing more safety. Here, again, they went back to the railroad Morse circuit designs, changed them slightly - and thereby developed the Catlin grip which was in radio to stay for many years. Ask the young radio operator of today what is a Catlin grip and he may think you are crazy. The old timer would have answered the question in two parts. In his reply he'd say the Catlin grip is that method of holding a radio key between the thumb and first two fingers - or - a Catlin grip is a bakelite handle on a radio key with two holding ledges instead of one.

Finally, there were the Alexanderson Alternators. While the Arc and Spark transmitters of those early days were quite crude, here was an early radio development so efficient that in high power on low frequency, it still has few parallels today. In physical shape, the alternator was exactly what its name implied, to the eye resembling in size the power generating units frequently found in small town independent electric companies. Actually, an electric motor or, in some cases, a steam engine or turbine drove the alternator and it differed only in the cycles or waves generated per second. The number of poles or windings and the speed of rotation between the ground and antenna hookups determined the radio frequency. They were all large assemblies, often with a pit opening into the cement floor for working underneath them. To our knowledge and recollection, they were never successful in small or mobile sizes. The shore stations - then - utilized them almost exclusively.

It took a long period of time, ranging from 15 minutes to better than an hour, to wind them up into the speed of rotation necessary to reach their assigned radio frequency. The bearing suspensions were fine, and the clearance between the fields and rotor segments measured out in the thickness of cigarette paper. Once they reached speed, with governor regulated rotation, the alternator emitted one of the finest radio signals it was possible to tune in for copying. On long wave or low frequency, there was no fading. The signal reached out with its ground wave along the surface of the earth, followed its curvature, and stayed in your earphones with reliability.

By comparison with the spark or arc type transmitters, there were few of the Alexanderson type alternators ever built for use in the United States. Those that were shipped into this country became famous in their employment - WII and WGG in New Jersey, WRF and WSO at Marion, Massachusetts, and WSY in Sayville, New York, were some of them.

Years later, in 1939, we visited the old Sayville Station at Long Island. The entire communications setup had originally been built by the Germans and was seized by the American Government in or near our entry into World War I. Later, the installation was operated by the Navy and also Mackay Radio. Finally, after a period of idleness, it was taken over in 1939 by the Civil Aeronautics Administration. To our deep sorrow, we learned that a local "junkie" was being paid to haul away the one Alexanderson alternator stored in one of the partly vacant buildings. (To make room - they said - for more modern equipment.) The fine old Alexanderson unit was still in fine shape and could easily have been restored to the air waves. Strangely enough - although the Government could not foresee its needs - the same Government agency a few years later found itself renting duplicate equipment at Marion, Massachusetts at a cost of hundreds of dollars per day to meet the need of long range weather broadcasts in the World War II effort.

As if history must carry more tragedy, the Marion installations were razed a few years ago, and we are hopeful that some enterprising party in the radio field will save one or both of the two remaining alternators for further use or preserve them for posterity. One installation, rumor has it, was shipped to Honolulu for possible further use.

The shipboard radio operator still holds forth today, but his salary, job requirements and working atmosphere have changed considerably. In the 20's

and 30's, to get his license, the fledgling operator took an FCC examination embracing either an arc, spark or tube shipboard installation. He also demonstrated, for the license examiners, an ability to copy or transmit at least 16 words per minute. With his license, and sometimes supplying his own uniform, he was then eligible to "sign on" at 40 to 150 dollars per month and found. If his assignment came on one of the crack ocean liners, he worked "tricks" with several other operators. If his billet came on a freighter or tramp steamer, his watches or work hours varied and he drew other duties as well. One detestable sideline was "cargo tending" each time he reached port. The duty of standing near the holds while stevedores handled the loading or unloading, and checking off on a clipboard sheaf of papers verification of the cargo movement. Thus, his time ashore was frequently briefer than the rest of the crew.

Out on the high seas, he came into his own. The radio shack, for several reasons, was usually located high in the ship's superstructure and near the bridge deck. Any radio operator could spot it immediately, with its antenna leads and, in later years, the inevitable compass loop. Here he spent most of his time, even sleeping in a wall mounted bunk near his key, while the rest of the crew had separate quarters. On every ship he was called "sparks," regarded as somewhat eccentric, and often in a world of thought of his own. In truth, he often was.

He also stoically accepted the legendary law of the sea that he and the Captain, in any maritime disaster, would go down with the ship unless help arrived in time.

On watch, at 15 and 45 minutes after each hour, he guarded the International Distress frequency of 500 Kilocycles for at least 3 minutes with religious perseverance. In other times, he monitored shore stations on their calling frequencies, copied weather broadcasts, transmitted position or sailing reports, or relayed messages from other ships further at sea. This last duty, of course, faded out to some extent with the introduction of high frequency equipment. With judicious wavelength selection (often near 36 meters), the marine operator could by then reach almost any shore station desired.

With the use of high frequency radio - from 2 to 20 megacycles - it also became his evening and late night duty to copy the world news and press reports. Here was a magic land at the tips of his fingers and in the slowly tuned dials. WGG/WSC - on the low wavelengths - for the early news releases, stock reports, sports columns. This broadcast, averaging 18 to 22 words per minute, was run out on the Tuckerton or New Brunswick, New Jersey, wavelengths using excellently prepared automatic tape and averaging two to two and a half hours in length of broadcast. All the press stations interrupted transmissions at the 15 and 45 minute "silent periods" - and while he kept an ear cocked for distress signals on 500 Kilocycles in another nearby radio receiver, his arm frequently reached for the coffee pot at his elbow. He was probably also the first cigarette smoker to introduce the habit of splitting a cigarette package down its length and then folding it into a V shape where its contents remained in easy reach.

WGG usually finished its long roundup of the news flashes near mid evening, East Coast Time. The shipboard radio operator then shifted coils in his radio receiver from a rack overhead, changed batteries, and started tuning for KFS or KPH in San Francisco. If he felt lively on the typewriter, he could also later start taking code transmissions from KUP, the Hearst San Francisco Examiner,

running in the start at 30 words per minute. Later in the night, when the daily broadcast of the Arthur Brisbane news feature column got cranked up, the transmissions pushed up to 40 and 45 words per minute. The dots and dashes now flew in a fast blur, and the experienced code handler copied several whole words or even sentences behind the incoming transmissions. When KUP signed off or "went to bed," the news could be rounded out with some of the slow drawing transmissions of VIS, Melbourne, Australia, in news of "down under."

If the radio operator was on a large passenger carrying ocean liner, he copied all the newscasts on a typewriter with the ribbon "locked out" or removed, and cutting directly into a blue stencil sheet. Later, the stencils were run off in a mimeograph machine with individual copies provided for each passenger stateroom. If he was aboard a freighter, perhaps an original and one or two carbon copies would do. The original went to the Captain and bridge crew, a second copy on the bulletin board for the deck and engineer members, and a third copy for the radio shack file.

Today, it is most disappointing to sit down and tune across the 4 to 20 megacycle bands on a good commercial type radio receiver. Where countless press stations of years ago were winding up on the hour for newscasts, we now most often hear nothing but the endless see-saw chatter of signal-shift radio-teletypewriter circuits. Also nearly gone, are the countless manually or automatically keyed point-to-point Morse shore circuits.

15 or more years ago, high speed tape circuits were the backbone of communications throughout the world. A clever German lad by the name of Kleinschmidt had invented a machine to perforate a series of holes in oiled paper tapes approximately one-half inch in width. When this material was fed into a "keying head" a series of selector pins, pushing up and down, constantly probed the paper tape, located holes, and keyed International Morse operation of an associated transmitter or a "cornet" of several transmitters operating on different wavelengths. At the other end of the circuit, the receiving station employed three or more radio receivers, each with its own "diversity" antenna, and finally the output of all receivers was fed into one mixer. The signal in one receiver might fade for a moment, but usually the others would "hold up" the incoming signal level. The combined signal output was then led to an electrical armature with a moving pen arm. An ink-pot stood just above it, coupled with a tiny rubber hose, to the moving pen as it scribbled various shaped mounds. A transmitted dot shoved the pen arm upward into a tiny inverted V. A dash - or transmission equal to the length of three dots - caused an inverted or wide U shaped affair. The pen itself touched lightly on a narrow or 3/8 inch ribbon of pure white, but strong paper tape pulled downward from a large reel suspended above the pen armature by a set of power driven rollers. The experienced "mux" operator, as he was called, then had to adjust the tape pulling speed into phase relationship with the incoming radio signals. If the tape puller moved slowly - and the incoming dots and dashes were a blur of high speed - he ended up with nothing but a clod of ink covered tape. It therefore became usual practice for the transmitting station to run a string of automatically keyed dots or a call tape near the speeds intended for the transmissions to follow. The receiving "mux" man then adjusted his tape puller for the "run."

While rights to the Kleinschmidt tape perforator were bought or leased out by an American firm, the automatic keyers and tape inking receiving units

were built under several different trade names. Boehme, a New York Company, turned out the most commonly employed devices, with slow speed "keyers" - good for up to about 90 words per minute in what was called a "dry keying head." The higher speed keying units had all of their gears and selector pin assemblies immersed in heavy oil and were capable of running - with proper adjustment - in high speed "mux runs" of from 150 to 200 and more words per minute. An English firm, by the name of Creed, turned out equipment of a somewhat similar nature. They were less costly - confined to lower speeds, like the Boehme "dry keying heads" - and often cantankerous in their repair.

Reading or transcribing the incoming or received "auto or mux tape" was an art in itself. Tapes carrying the result of slow radio transmissions (far under a hundred words per minute) carried fairly square envelopes or up and down motions defining the dots and dashes. When the speeds were higher - say 150 words per minute or more - the dots and dashes appeared as hills because the pen friction, centrifugal force and a few other factors took away the sharp corners. None of these variations ever bothered the experienced tape reading man greatly. Tucking an end of the paper ribbon into a small bridge which ran above his typewriter and then dropping its tip into the clamping rollers of another tape puller, he was ready for business. Some of them used foot treadles like a sewing machine while others used knee treadles to control the speed of the tape movement over the bridge above the typewriter. Still others disdained any control of speed and with complete abandon would set the tape rolling through the bridge at one given speed of the motor control pot. Almost all the "mux" operators wore visors to shade their eyes from the heavy lighting necessary in tape reading. Near his elbow, there were various piles of message blanks, two copy, three copy, four and sometimes as high as eight copy, all with carbon interleaving, and frequently each page in the message book colored differently. So away he would go, "pulling a Mux run" as the saying went.

Keying a high speed Mux "cornet" was real music, but music only to the operators. The "cornets" more than likely consisted of three or more radio frequencies, keyed simultaneously, in several megacycles difference to provide the distant receiving station a necessary backup or testing for the constant frequency changes necessitated by the variations of the Heaviside layers, or what we now call the Ionosphere. Keying from San Francisco to New York, for instance, the West Coast operator would start installing several lower frequencies an hour or so before sunset, knowing that New York was already entering or in darkness. Then, as his higher frequencies became wobbly and New York picked him off on a lower frequency belt, he would move one of the released transmitters down some more.

With good atmospheric conditions and plenty of traffic, two mux boys would often feed one high speed transmitter keying head together. As each message was numbered for accountability, one man would punch the odd numbers, the other the even numbers, and the keying head, chewing away at 100 to 150 words per minute, would gobble their combined efforts and toss them across the continent or an ocean.

The mux boys, the real experts, operated with considerable pride and could do tricks with the tape that often left some operators wondering what happened. One steadfast tool was the gluepot and its contents had to be good, not the watery stuff. An error, detected early enough, could be torn out, a corrected section patched in, and the keying head

never interrupted. Almost all the keying heads - where the tape actually controlled the transmitter - ran dots if the tape was lifted out. To avoid the dots, of course, the unit could be switched off its live position. Call tapes were made up in a hoop or loop, the International test signal V or a CQ, the "de" defining "from", followed by the Station call letters. Most operators, running a 5 minute test or call period prior to a broadcast, would lift off the call tape and then push in the actual tape for broadcast. In the interval, there was either a string of dots or silence because of the key shut-off. A more clever way was to tear the call tape at some predetermined point, and with duplicate lettering on the broadcast tape, patch in the broadcast. At the end of the transmission, the operator prepared another call tape. When it had fed into the keying head, he merely looped it around, seized the glue brush, and with one quick swipe tailed its end into another loop. All this resulted in the receiving operator ending up with a complete sequence of automatic keying and without interruptions of any sort.

Both the receiving and transmission "mux" tapes were of highly inflammable material and since most of the operators smoked incessantly, sometimes there were amusing results. More than once we've seen the labor of an hour or so in punching tape go up in smoke and it's a wonder that more radio shore stations were not burned down.

Tape of either type was pulled in on a "mux run" with yards and yards accumulating rapidly. In either situation, after receiving or preparing hundreds and hundreds of feet of tape, it then had to be backed down into huge baskets or boxes so that its beginning was ready for the feed or start. The baskets usually sat near the edge of the work desks and so did the endless string of burning cigarettes. The writer, in fact, recalls one evening of long tape preparation for a circuit transmission to Paris. When the French station gave a "go ahead - reception fine" - we contentedly stuck the tape in the keying head, glanced at the tachometer speed to make sure it was holding its governor speeds and then walked toward the coffee pot at the other end of the room. We had just filled a cup, stirred in sugar and cream and was looking for a vacant chair, when someone yelled "fire." Yes, there it was, the results of much work that evening quickly going up in smoke. One of our stray cigarette butts had fallen off the ledge near the keying head and even the desperate moves of several nearby radiomen with fire extinguishers failed to save the result of our early efforts. One would think this experience might have worked a cure in the smoking habit. But this was a built in feature of the job - and after the laughter and jibes of everyone in the "radio central" room, we went back to work, reworking duplicate tapes for the rest of the evening.

Brass pounding - either on an Associated Press wire circuit, or in dots and dashes over the air - was something like the prize fight game. If an operator felt cocky or thought he was "hot" on the key, there was always someone else with the capability to "snow" him under.

Years ago, at the age of near 20, the writer thought he was pretty good on a Morse or landline sounder. Our first code learning had come from an old railroad man and we finally felt we could "rattle a tobacco can" - as the old saying used to go - with the best of them. The tobacco can, incidentally, was usually one of the flat Prince Albert type, which the operator wedged down between the anvil and armature of the key sounder where its tinny or metal properties developed a distinct tone.

One day, we drew a wire circuit assignment connecting into the old Whitehall Street building in downtown New York - one of the largest commercial communication centers of that era. The operator on the other end started out politely and with beautiful Morse rhythm, signified a lot of "traffic messages" were on hand for us. We gave a go ahead and after receiving the first few messages perfectly, we reached over, opened the key and said "faster." The traffic came faster - not in a burst of speed - but a perceptible upward turn. After a few more messages - since we were keeping up with it, we commented again. The operator at the other end again complied courteously. Still later, we made our fatal mistake. We opened the key and said, "How about some speed?" and within the next few minutes concluded we had been "put under the table." Bluntly, we had caught only a word here and there and it was with considerable confusion we straightened out the remaining repeats in messages.

The real payoff came a few days later. With some idle time in the New York City area, we wandered over to the Whitehall Wire Center. There, in a huge room filled with tables, the sound of countless Morse circuits dominated everything. Since no one was attracted by our visit, we finally edged down through the long corridors and finally found a Morse wire operator momentarily sitting idle. He looked like the genial sort and we led him into some casual conversation for a few minutes. Finally, we placed the question, "Who is the operator signing 'RC'?" Pointing with a pencil, he indicated a desk near one of the far corners. "That," said he, "is RC, one of our good ones. She is a little old, with her white hair, but she has been pounding brass for more years than I can remember." I fell silent - took a few steps in the direction indicated - and then after listening to the brass hammering at her table, recognized that my experiences in communication had just started. Although I made no attempt to introduce myself, several days later - via our Morse circuit - I learned that she had learned of my visit. Still later, too, and somewhat comforting - was the knowledge that other Morse operators had run through the same experience before me.

Pay of ship-board wireless men in the early days was notoriously poor. Part of this, no doubt, was the reluctance of the steamship companies to accept new innovations of questionable or unproven value, and the efforts of the wireless manufacturers and service organizations to keep their costs low to overcome resistance in adopting their products. Pay of the operators became a vulnerable factor in the transaction.

These conditions resulted in the formation - Circa 1920 of the United Radio Telegrapher's Association, (URTA). Most wireless men joined the Association and they were able to bring about material improvement in both the salaries and working conditions of its members. During the 1930's, the A.R.T.A. came into being and they in turn were also able to improve the lot of their members, both in compensation and with some fringe benefits. Today, the profession is highly unionized, with retirement pay and other rights that were not even thought of in the early days of the art.

With the passage of time, a transition in the 'image of the wireless-man began to occur. He became less of a 'tourist' and more of a professional man.

Statistics compiled by the Bureau of Navigation in the U.S. Dept. of Commerce (Report of Feb. 28 1914) show that 43% (percent) of 'sea-going' wireless operators were **NOT OVER 20 YEARS OLD!** Contrast this with today's radio officers who are likely to be older in years and experience than the skipper of their ship.

Truly, the art and the men associated with it have matured over the years and they have become the respected professional men who 'know their job' and are technical experts in their line of work, ranking with that of any other phase of ship operation and responsibility.

During World War II, salaries for the brass-pounders went overboard the other way, with extreme pay tied to astronomical risks. Merchant shipping had become the easy prey of Nazi U boats. A few years ago, the writer worked with a radio operator who had sailed in a 70 ship convoy, its nucleus originating in the North River of New York, and joined later by more ships as it progressed up the Atlantic seaboard. Destination, Murmansk, Russia. Salary, near 100 dollars per day, plus a \$1,000 bonus if the voyage was completed safely. The convoy moved at the speed of the slowest ship, circled constantly by fast moving destroyers. Total radio silence maintained, with "mast blinker lights" employed from ship to ship in the handling of each message. At night, each ship was guided by a small light shown in a funnel like arrangement on the stern of the craft just ahead. This particular convoy - one of the first to attempt moving large supplies to the Russian Allies, suffered a terrible toll. Nazi submarine wolf-packs struck just south of Iceland. This poor brasspounder - even years later after the war - could still recall the circumstances to the point where he would break down and be useless for work for the rest of his work schedule. The horror of seeing munition ships on several sides of him - only half mile distances of silhouette, in one moment, then blossoms of flame the next - were too much for him. From his reluctant recollections, only 30 vessels continued onward, with less than 10 reaching the port of Murmansk. What the U boat packs had missed, the Stuka dive bombers continued working on as they reached the Russian Gulf.

Yet the merchant marine - and the radio operators that made up the crew were considered rewarded enough with their high pay and on return to New York berths, expected to "sign on immediately" for another run.

The World War II period gave birth to the third or fourth change in distress signals. Possibly there were even others. The Republic sinking, as mentioned earlier, had employed the CQD. After the early Geneva Radio Conventions, the letters "SOS" came into more conventional use - easy to transmit, and likely made to indicate "ship on shore."

But even before our entry into World War II, the Allied radio operators had fashioned a new signal. "SSS" became the cry for "submarine sinking ship" and in the height of our war effort - and where some 300 ships were going to the bottom on the Atlantic monthly - there was hardly a night when it was not heard.

TALES
OF THE WIRELESS PIONEERS



SOCIETY OF WIRELESS PIONEERS
P. O. BOX 536
SANTA ROSA, CALIFORNIA 95402

This reminds the writer of a transcribed dot and dash radio call tape, automatically keyed by the British shore station GKI during the "Battle of Britain." We had been tuning across the various wave bands this one evening, when we heard the slow drawl of GKI. Its transmissions were running the usual test letter V in a series. These were then followed with the "de" GKI, and this was followed by "TO HELL WITH HITLER." We still treasure this tiny piece of tape because it bespoke of a courage point in a time where - by all odds - the English were at the last ditch point of defenses.

Perhaps this picture of the "wireless operators" heyday would be incomplete unless we recounted a little of at least one peacetime "distress signal" and the vainless efforts bent in a race across some of the Pacific to save the crewmen of a ship known to be doomed for the bottom.

We had been covering press copying one evening. Our ship's position, some 350 miles southerly and westerly of Honolulu, on a rough heading toward Tutuila, Samoa. By habit, we pulled our heavy Baldwin type crystal earphones from the connections on the press receiver and moved the wire jack connections over a few inches into the receiver output for another unit tuned to the low frequency 500 kilocycle band. Static, of course, tumbled into the earphones as it always does in the tropical areas. With the earphones around our neck, we were pouring a cup of coffee. But at this point it dawned on us that there it was - the slow steady keying - three dots carefully spaced, three dashes of somewhat longer than usual length, followed by three more dots. This series came three times. A glance at the clock and it was in the center of the 15 minute "silent period." Then the message followed:

"SOS SOS SOS DE (call letters we've forgotten)
SS Everett RT (Coordinates of Latitude and Longitude)
LADEN IN GRAIN. GREAT CIRCLE VANCOUVER
TO YOKOHAMA. FIRE NUMBER ONE AND THREE HOLDS.
USING WATER. REQUEST ASSISTANCE/ SIGNED MASTER"

With all thoughts of press copying gone, we dashed to the bridge deck where the first officer, after its reading, immediately inquired for plots on any other ships answering. In our excitement, we hadn't followed this up, but on the deck below a few minutes later we were soon in touch with KFS, Mackay Radio. Yes, they had received the distress, several other ships were nearer, but while we were nearly 900 miles away, we held the advantage of greater speeds. Back on the bridge with this information, quick decisions of the Captain confirmed this. Quick orders rattled into the speaking tubes and intercom systems. We would run under "forced draft" - and where we had been lolling along in the oily swells of the Pacific, we were now rapidly turning about and the beat of our four screws and the now heavier bow waves made it evident that tensesness had already gone through the entire ship.

"Laden in grain" - the officers on the bridge deck had said in my presence - "and that means the water put into the holds to kill the fire will swell the grain and God help them. The seams are likely to part. Either way - they've probably 'bought it' and you, 'sparks' - speaking to me - "back to your key, give our position, and confirm our estimates as soon as we shoot them down to you."

The operator on the SS Everett stayed at his key and admirably played it carefully. Every half hour or so, more terse messages on progress of the fires. Meanwhile, aboard our ship, the firemen were working in 30 minute relays in the boiler

rooms. Beneath us the screws picked up the higher and higher beats and as we progressed further into the northern latitudes the sea and wave actions became stronger. Bow waves that had occasionally spilled green water over the rails now came in over the foredeck in sweeping rollers and the bow watch had long since retreated to the second deck position as the water rolled in and out of the scuppers. I thought of the old destroyer sayings - "under two waves and over one" and felt thankful we were not on a destroyer.

Slightly over a day later - or near 25 hours after the first distress call - the key on the SS Everett went dead. A message had been started reading - "TAKING WATER FAST. OPEN SEAMS. PSN..." but it never finished. However, our bridge crew reckoned - and rightly - she had not moved greatly from her original position - and we raced onward.

Thirty-three hours after the first call we came into the area - in the dawning of an early sunlight - reflecting bits of wreckage, but dominated by the unusual appearance of a floating sea of grain. The sea was yellow with it. We had arrived too late. Lloyd's shipping list would carry another delation, and another "sparks" had gone down with his ship.



LESTER EDWARD BACHMAN - 1219-V

One of the best introductions I can give "Les" Bachman is to print the above heading which he drew and used in the late 20's to identify the weekly column he wrote and carried in many of the Eastern papers. It is quite a 'coincidence' that one of the SWP's publications carried the same title.

Les was one of the top "MUX" men in the business. "Ye Ed" met him for the first time in the late 1940's when he was conducting a seminar type meeting of the Communications Staff of the CAA's Eastern Region up on Madison Avenue in New York. He was a supervisor out at WSY at the time. Les also put the Direction Finding equip't "Ye Ed" procured up on Marthas Vinyard and over the years saved many pilots and equipment by giving them a steer to find the runway.

Talk about a life of adventure and action!

Les was assigned in the early 1930's to 'lighter-than-air' craft at Lakehurst by the Navy. Circa 1933 he worked a trick at Station KUP - one of the top-flight code stations of its day. He returned after a tour in the Orient where he welcomed Ed Busby when he came in on the first clipper flight to Manila. Again he sailed on Patrol Duty on the Yangtze River between Tsingtao and Chefoo. Another time he was chasing a bandit named Sandino down in Nicaragua. He worked alongside Matt Tierney at WCC. He served with distinction at Sayville and Bernegat during the war years. Eastern Division Chief, Bob Donaldson called him one of the best Mux men in the business.

"Les" is now busy writing a book he hopes to have published in the near future. It will carry the title . . . "OF ACES, ASSES AIRWAYS AND ALTITUDES". We predict that it will make quite an impact in the field of aviation. He has our advance order for a copy.

Les has promised to furnish more copy of his experiences which we will welcome in the column of "SPARKS". Right now he is up to his ears in details incident to the publication of his forth-coming book. We wish him every success.



I had been attending the High School of Commerce in Vancouver trying to absorb sufficient knowledge of wireless telegraphy to become a Wireless Operator, and having just finished writing the government examinations, was spending Christmas at home in Victoria. Unexpectedly, two days before New Year's 1928 I received a letter from the Divisional Superintendent (E.J. Haughton) of the Canadian Government Radio Service, Department of Marine and Fisheries, that an operator was required for the Fishery Patrol vessel C.G.S. "Givenchy" due to sail on January 2nd, 1928. Would I be available? Would I!

This was at a time when the Fishery vessels "Givenchy" and "Malaspina", (both ex-W I mine sweepers) shared duties with their sister Naval vessels HMCS "Thiepval" and HMCS "Armentieres" in maintaining a life-saving patrol during the winter months. One vessel at a time was stationed at Bamfield in Barclay Sound for a period of three weeks ready to proceed, in two hours or less, to the assistance of any vessel in need of help on that part of the rugged West Coast of Vancouver Island, which had become known as the "Graveyard of the Pacific." Normally, "Givenchy" carried only one wireless operator, but during these tours of duty two extra operators were taken on to enable a continuous watch to be maintained on the international distress wave length of 600 metres.

"Givenchy" was well equipped, being fitted with ½ KW "ice box" rotary-gap spark transmitter, a crystal receiver modified for use with "Q" valves and a 10-inch spark coil emergency transmitter.

On January 2nd, 1928, I joined "Givenchy" (Capt. A. Henderson) at her home port at the Naval Coaling Jetty at Esquimalt. The two other operators were G.G. "Gord" Barrie and C.J. "Cec" Gray - both were old friends since they had graduated from the wireless school a few months ahead of me. Being the junior operator I, of course, drew the 12 - 4 watch and the operator's bunk next to the operating position; the other two operators shared the VIP stateroom.

After an uneventful 8-hour run out of the Straits of Juan du Fuca we duly relieved our Navy counterpart and settled down to regular watchkeeping tied up at the government wharf next to the Pacific Cable Board Station at Bamfield.

Normally we remained alongside the wharf except when it was necessary to make room for the Canadian Pacific S.S. "Princess Maquinna" on her regular 10-day round trip up and down the coast or a 30-mile run to Port Alberni for fresh supplies.

On that tour of duty, however, I was early intro-

duced to West Coast winter weather when on January 5th we pitched and rolled our way to Tofino to pick up two survivors of the ill-fated rum-running schooner "Noble" who had been rescued by the Tofino life boat off Escalante Reef.

The rest of our stay passed comparatively peacefully except for the usual round of parties and dances laid on by the residents of the village and reciprocated in like manner by the ship's company.

After two tours, I left "Givenchy" at the end of February when I returned briefly to school and wrote the examination for a First Class Certificate after which I shipped out on April 1, 1928, to spend two years with the Canadian Marconi Co. on coastal and deep-sea merchant vessels.

Towards the end of April, 1930, I was enroute from Vancouver, B.C. to Skagway, Alaska, as operator on the CPR freighter "Princess Ena," when I received a message from the Division Superintendent (E.J. Haughton) of the Canadian Government Radio Service in Victoria, that in response to my earlier application a position was now available as Junior Radio Operator. I at once dispatched two messages, one of acceptance to the Division Superintendent, and the other my resignation from the Canadian Marconi Co., effective on our return to Vancouver.

On May 10, 1930, I reported to the Division Office in Victoria and was assigned to the C.G.S. "Malaspina" as a replacement for C.J. "Cec" Gray who was going ashore to one of the coast stations. However, upon arriving at "Malaspina" at the Navy Yard in Esquimalt, I found changes had been made. G.G. "Gord" Barrie had decided to move to "Malaspina" with Capt. Henderson and I

The Memoirs of a Veteran

ARTHUR P. "ART" STARCK - "VETERAN" Member (1155) of the Society has certainly had his share of experience in "brass-pounding" and communications since he started to sea back in 1927 on the C. G. S. "GIVENCHY" (CGFB). He has served on most of the West Coast "Princess Ships" as Radio Officer and also at many of the Coastal Stations. Later he transferred to the Aeronautical Section and served at many Airway Stations along the Canadian Trans-continental as well as other routes. Later he was brought into Headquarters of the Dept. of Transport at Ottawa where he served until 1972 in various administrative positions - last being in the field of Radio Regulations for the Department.

Art is a member of the Radio Society of Ontario, Ottawa Amateur Radio Club, ARRL, etc. His call is VE3ZS. We think you will agree, after reading Art's Memoirs, that he has indeed enjoyed a life of action and adventure.

was to replace him on "Givenchy" (Capt. Walter Redford). This was a lucky turn of events for me as "Givenchy" entered drydock the following day for refit and I was therefore able to have several weeks at home as there was little for an operator to do on board at such a time. A Supplementary Pay-List for May, 1930, showed that I received \$78.06 as salary and carried the notation ".... Board not deducted, boat being in dock."

Watch keeping on "Givenchy" was not by any means onerous. Normal watches for all government vessels on the West coast at that time, was the first fifteen minutes of every even hour between 0800 and 2215 PST. However, as the receiver, connected to a loudspeaker, was usually left on a much greater guard was actually in effect. Also it was an easy thing to advise the nearest coast station if a scheduled watch was expected to be missed; thus there was no difficulty in arranging for fishing or hunting expeditions or visits ashore at fish canneries or logging camps. Alternatively, watches would be extended if an important message was expected or to copy press broadcasts when we were out of range of the few broadcast stations then in existence. It was a good life aboard "Givenchy."

Normally, routine patrol duties took "Givenchy" around Vancouver Island, with an occasional run as far north as Prince Rupert. As well as becoming familiar with the villages, settlements and fish canneries, I was also able to visit the coast stations at Alert Bay (VAP), Bull Harbour (VAG) and Prince Rupert (VAJ) and to meet many of my fellow operators.

"Givenchy" tours of sea duty were limited by the fuel (coal) which she could carry and under normal circumstances did not exceed three weeks. Coaling was usually carried out at the Navy Dockyard at Esquimalt or at Ladysmith on the East Coast of Vancouver Island depending on the area in which she was operating. Coaling facilities at Departure Bay, Nanoose Bay and Union Bay were used on occasion.

In those days sea lions were of considerable nuisance to salmon fishermen by destroying seine nets when becoming entangled in them. The Fisheries authorities decided to help out by conducting a sea lion hunt each spring in Queen Charlotte Sound. Thus, in April "Givenchy" would leave for Queen Charlotte Sound to spend three weeks based at Safety Cove on the South-east side of Calvert Island, a spot which while uninhabited provided good anchorage and shelter. William "Bill" Madden, a Fisheries Officer, came along as Hunt Master and while he had a machine gun with him it soon proved impractical and was used only for target practice. Wind and tide permitting, we would daily proceed to the Sea Lion group of rocks several miles off the southern tip of Calvert Island where these large sea mammals congregated in their thousands. As it was not possible for "Givenchy" to close the rocks to permit hunting from on-board, it was necessary to land hunters on the rocks from the ship's launch. This called for a high degree of seamanship on the part of our boatswain and agility of those going ashore, especially when loaded down with a .303 rifle and pockets full of ammunition. It was even trickier getting back on board as her bow would come rising up on a swell! The rocks were only a few feet above high water, smooth and always wet, with an ever present swell running. At first the bulls, some weighing from 800 to 1000 pounds or more, would bellow their defiance at us; but after the first few shots all would take to the water. From then on it was a matter of sharp-shooting at comparatively small moving targets as heads would appear above the water.

A weekly trip was made to the cannery at Rivers Inlet for fresh water and to pick up fresh supplies shipped up from Victoria. On days when weather or sea conditions precluded our hunt we would fill in with trout fishing in a nearby lake or trolling for salmon from the launch in sheltered waters. We lived well on "Givenchy."

That winter I found myself once again back at Bamfield on life-saving patrol duty; this time as Chief Operator and the privilege of occupying "Givenchy's" VIP accommodation. This was one of the few better years and we were not called out on any mercy missions.

In February, 1931, I was transferred to the Direction Finding Station at Pachena Point (VAD). Therefore, after turning over "Givenchy" to my successor I caught the "Princess Maquinna" for the over-night trip up the coast. The weather, as was quite common at that time of year, precluded a boat landing at Pachena and it was necessary to carry on to Bamfield. There Cec Grey met me and after leaving my personal luggage in care of the Life Saving Station to be delivered by the lifeboat as and when weather permitted, we started off on the 10½ mile hike over the life-saving trail to Pachena. That was the only way to reach the station. Foolishly I was wearing a new pair of shoes and it took considerably longer than the usual 3 hours.

I learned that trail well in the next months. Weather had prevented the lighthouse tender C.G.S. "Estevan" from landing supplies and it became necessary to hike in on your day off to pack out food supplies for the following week. It was some two months before the lifeboat was able to effect a landing of food supplies and my personal kit.

Boat landings at Pachena were effected by an ingenious hoisting device. The station was located atop a cliff some eighty feet high. At the base of this cliff were numerous large off-shore rocks forming a narrow channel, known locally as "The Gap," some 50 feet wide into which the ever present swell would surge. Across "The Gap" from the top of the cliff to an off-shore rock was anchored a strong steel cable, on which ran a block and another cable which could be lowered at a point over the middle of "The Gap" to the boat bringing the supplies. "The Gap," of course, was far too small to permit a boat of any size to enter, so it was necessary to transfer supplies to a work-boat manned by strong-armed seamen using oars. It took considerable seamanship to bring a boat into "The Gap" and hold it in position while a sling net was lowered, loaded and then hooked to the cable for hoisting. It also took considerable skill on the part of the light-keeper, who was in charge of the hoist, to co-ordinate the heaving of the boat and the lifting or lowering of the sling. When the station's own boat was used, this also was lowered and hoisted on the cable as there was no place to beach it. Passengers usually had to scramble ashore on the rocks and then climb some 300 steps to the station. Occasionally they would ride in the boat on the cable - quite an experience for the uninitiated!

Pachena at that time consisted of a lighthouse (one of the strongest on the coast), the direction finding station, and accommodation for the staff. The lightkeeper (Jack Hunting) shared a small house with his family and the assistant lightkeeper, whom he was required to hire and pay out of his own pocket. A few years later a larger house was built for him. There were also two married quarters and the bachelors' quarters for the four radio operators. In addition there was a small two-room cabin for the telegraph lineman to use on his periodic patrols of Government Telegraph Service.

single iron-wire telephone circuit which ran up the coast. Only the radio office was provided with electricity which was developed by a 120-volt bank of large lead-acid cells. These cells were charged every few days by generators driven by oil burning engines. The fog alarm was located in its own building near the base of the cliff, where its air compressor was also driven by an oil engine but being so located its noise was not too disturbing once one became accustomed to it.

By the time I went out on annual leave later in the year I had become thoroughly fed up with using "shank's mare" on the trail to and from Bamfield and was determined to do something about it. So when I returned it was on a light-weight motor-cycle - the first motor-driven wheeled vehicle to be used on the West Coast. The trail had only been designed for foot travel and some of the grades were almost prohibitive and the bridges (of which there were quite a few) provided only two-inch clearance between the handrails and the handle bars of my machine. However, after some road work I was able to get into high gear for about 3 miles and to cover the 10½ miles in an hour instead of the 3 hours on foot. As part of my tool kit for running repairs I always carried an axe to chop out wind falls across the trail which were quite common during the stormy winter months.

Other hazards of the trail, especially when hiking it alone were bears and cougars. Although no one was ever molested, bears were often heard and occasionally seen, and it was wise to ensure that you never got between a mother and her cubs. It became normal practice to sing or whistle when on the trail to give the animals fair warning of your approach and thus avoid spooking them. Cougars were quite plentiful and were known by their tracks to follow lone hikers. One winter when the deer population was badly depleted, one was desperate enough for food (probably tempted by one of the station dogs - a favorite food) to walk up the boardwalk in broad day light. It was its last walk - Jack Hunting killed it with a fusillade from a .22 rifle at about twenty-five feet. I skinned it out and its pelt made a nice bedside mat.

The arrival of the lighthouse tender, C.G.S. "Estevan" with station supplies about three times a year, heralded busy days for all members of the staff since, in addition to personal food supplies, coal for heating and fuel for the engines had to be landed. Of course, "Estevan" could not approach "The Gap," nor could she anchor, so would have-to or cruise slowly back and forth about a mile off-shore while supplies were brought into "The Gap" by her work boats and then hoisted to the top of the cliff. The coal was in sacks which had to be moved by wheel-barrow several hundred feet to a storage bin (the cement basement of an old burnt out building) and dumped, while the 40-gallon oil drums were rolled along a narrow board-walk to the power house a hundred yards away. Weather permitting, a loud speaker would be placed in an open window of the office so that the operator on watch could do double duty! It often took two to three days to land all supplies with "Estevan" proceeding to Bamfield in the evening and returning the following morning.

That station was normally staffed with two married operators and two single operators. I shared the bachelor's quarters first with Harry Grayston and later with W.E. Beart (variously known as Ed, Eddie or Bill). Ed was a Cockney not too long out from Bow Bells; he was a good companion but it took several months of living with him before I was fully able to understand all he was saying! Of course, there was no such thing as a mess at Pachena - or any other station for that matter - and we back-

elors had to do all our own housekeeping and cooking. As a result of rotating shifts we would get 86 consecutive hours off every three weeks at which time it was our usual practice to spend a couple of days in Bamfield at the Cable Station, where the Pacific Cable Board maintained a large staff house and mess for their single personnel. They were very kind to their "cousins" from Pachena, permitting us to become members of the mess and putting aside a room for our exclusive use. This room was known as the "Pachena Room," and, as far as I am aware was still available until the Board discontinued its operation at Bamfield in the 1960's. It was indeed pleasant to spend a couple of days, enjoying meals you hadn't cooked yourself and being pampered by Chinese "boys." The reading room, billiard tables and badminton and tennis courts, as well as a change of faces, meant a lot to us. I will always have kind and pleasant memories of the staff at the Cable Station.

It was during the "Christmas Gale" (one could always rely on a major storm a week either side of Christmas) that I found myself with my first distress incident in my lap. The OIC was in Bamfield and the senior operator somewhere on the trail returning to the station; I was by that time number three on the station and therefore nominally in charge for the moment. I was on watch during the afternoon, probably wondering when the storm would start letting up and thanking my lucky stars that it was not I who was slugging along the trail, when I was abruptly aroused from my thoughts by an SOS crashing out of the loud-speaker. It was a small American coaster only a few miles off the station, she had apparently been trying to reach shelter in Barclay Sound but the wind and seas were too much for her and she was now out of control and drifting steadily towards the rocky coast. I was able to get a fast bearing on her before her signals suddenly went dead in the midst of a transmission. This bearing was immediately passed to "Givenchy" who was on duty at Bamfield. Our OIC was visiting on board at the time so there was no need to attempt to advise him individually. The lifeboat station at Bamfield was advised of the situation by telephone over the "iron wire." Shortly afterwards both "Givenchy" and the lifeboat were bucking mountainous seas and a full gale looking for the hapless vessel. Soon afterwards a U.S. Coast Guard Cutter joined the search and although it was carried on all that night and the following day no sign of the stricken vessel was found nor were any further radio signals heard. It was two days later that word was finally received that she had finally reached safe haven under her own power at Neah Bay on the U.S. side of the Straits of Juan du Fuca. That news was the best Christmas present we could receive. We learned later that her signals had abruptly ceased when a huge sea had smashed into her wireless room, completely destroying all equipment; the operator luckily escaped unharmed. I received a reprimand concerning my handling of the incident in that I had not immediately informed the Divisional Superintendent at Victoria at the situation. However, when it was pointed out that - 1. the distress frequency would, because of the limited facilities at Pachena, have had to be used for the transmission of non-essential traffic, -2. guard of the distress frequency would have had to be abandoned during transmission of such a message, -3. other of our coast stations were fully aware of the situation, and -4. rescue action had immediately been taken to the extent possible, nothing further was heard of the matter.

Pachena was classed as an "isolated station" for which each operator received an "isolation allow-

ance" of \$4.00 per month. After two years, I was beginning to tire of these conditions and was looking for ways of getting a transfer. It was in the spring of 1933 that the R.C.M. Police transferred one of their patrol boats from the East Coast to the West Coast of Canada. Thus, it was that one day when I was in Bamfield, the R.C.M.P. Cruise "Adversus" was lying alongside the Government wharf and I met her operator (Gobeil). In the course of conversation Gobeil informed me that he was anxious to return to the East and was going to ask to be transferred. I lost no time in making an application for a posting to "Adversus" should the position become vacant. A reply from Victoria said they had no knowledge of any such possible vacancy but would keep my application in mind should one occur. A month later, on August 5, 1933, I reported for duty as Radio Operator/Pursor on board "Adversus" (Skipper Crofts) at Esquimalt.

On April 1, 1932, the R.C.M.P. had taken over the Preventive Service of the Department of National Revenue which formed the nucleus of its newly organized Marine Section. At the time the crews consisted mainly of Preventive Service personnel who had been engaged as Special Constables. Radio operators, however, as was the normal practice on all government vessels, were provided by the Radio Branch, Department of Marine and Fisheries on a loan basis. That is, they were members of and were paid by the Radio Branch regardless of where they were employed. The crew of "Adversus" when she was transferred from Halifax to join "E" Division, R.C.M.P. on the West Coast in the spring of 1933 consisted of East Coasters from the old Preventive Service. Later, several members were replaced by regular members of the R.C.M.P.

Former members of the Preventive Service were still wearing their Naval type uniforms and I was wearing a similar type officer's uniform with two stripes which was the normal Radio Branch issue for sea going operators. This caused some dissatisfaction on the part of the Skipper who sported only two stripes himself. At first he tried to get me to remove them (or at least one of them) but I declined on the grounds that I had been issued with them and that they designated my rank as Radio Officer of the Radio Branch and could only remove them on direct instructions from my employer; there the matter remained. No doubt, he realized it would be a sticky issue to raise officially.

"Adversus" was a wooden vessel of 130 tons gross tonnage, 130 feet in length, but comparatively narrow in breadth. She was powered by twin diesels and when pushed could do something in excess of 16 knots. She was a good sea boat but very wet in a head sea, preferring to "play submarine" by cutting through a sea rather than riding over it.

The radio room was not much more than an alcove on the starboard side immediately aft of the wheelhouse. There was no door, only a curtain to keep the light from the wheelhouse at night. It was so cramped in fact, that when sitting at the operating position one's feet rested on the motor-generator under the desk. There was no room to turn around and it was normal for the operator to slide out of his chair and back out of the office. The equipment consisted of a Canadian Marconi 100W4 transmitter and a MST/MSA receiver; there was no emergency equipment. This lack of equipment once led to the need to keying the antenna lead of the oscillating receiver to effect communications during a failure of the transmitter motor-generator power supply. Those MST receivers made good transmitters!

When I joined "Adversus" I was the only West Coaster on board, and as it became known that I was familiar with the coastal waters and tidal vagaries

I found myself providing navigational advice to the skipper, although at times it was not always followed which, at least in one instance, led to a few anxious moments. We were south bound through Johnson Straits, between Vancouver Island and the mainland, fast approaching Seymour Narrows with its then notorious Ripple Rock and associated rip tides. Advice in the Sailing Orders recommended that passage through the Narrows should not be attempted except for a period of two hours either side of slack water. As we were well outside these recommended limits I was somewhat surprised when we passed the last suitable anchorage before the Narrows, and although I mentioned this to the Skipper he decided that things looked all right and carried on. We cleared Ripple Rock successfully but then struck the full force of the tide rip. Eddies spun the vessel completely around twice and left us heading for a rocky shore in spite of the fact that both engines were by then going full astern. We were only a stone's throw from shore when we drifted into calmer water and the propellers were once again able to get a bite and take us out of trouble.

Later, when we had changed skippers and Lt. Cnfr. M.J. Savage, ex-R.N., was in command, we were manoeuvring in the Straits of Juan du Fuca in dense fog and after several hours our position became somewhat uncertain. This was in no way a reflection on the navigating ability of our deck officers when one considers the numerous course changes we had been making looking for suspected smugglers and the various tidal currents of these waters. I had been getting DF bearings from Pachena and the USCG station on Tatoosh Island which when plotted placed us well on the U.S. side of the Straits and several miles from our D.R. position. The skipper could not believe the difference and was sure there must be some mistake in the bearings; however, knowing the accuracy of bearings provided by these two stations (gained from my previous spell of duty at Pachena) I maintained my insistence of their accuracy. Several hours later when the fog lifted I was vindicated; there we were hugging the U.S. shore. After that I became the unofficial radio navigator; my job was not completed when the radio bearing was obtained, it had to be plotted and our position marked on the chart.

As time passed and I showed an aptitude for navigating I was often co-opted into acting as a spare deck officer and spent many a watch in the wheelhouse, especially at times when one of our deck officers was not aboard for one reason or another.

Also at about this time the surveillance work of "Adversus" was supplemented by a reconnaissance aircraft from the R.C.A.F., a single engine Fairchild float plane with the identification letters "XO". This became quite a "combined operations" effort as the aircraft was in command of Flt. Sgt. Harry Winnie (later Wing Commander) R.C.A.F., the wireless operator was a member of the R.C.C.S. and Const. W.M. "Tam" Taylor (later Inspector) R.C.M.P. rode as observer. This co-operation by the R.C.A.F. gave me the opportunity to get my first experience as an aircraft radio operator since the R.C.C.S. operator and I would occasionally exchange jobs - very unofficially. The radio equipment on "XO" was quite rudimentary consisting only of a tube transmitter and receiver capable of operating only on 600 metres, the H.T. power was provided by a small single-bladed generator mounted on one wing. Unless the transmitter was very carefully adjusted, keying it would result in "reversed morse"; that is, it would oscillate and emit a signal when the key was up and stop sending when the key was closed. It took a bit of getting used to but could be copied after a while.

During this period of "combined operations" the crew of "XO" would indulge in bombing practice, using rotten oranges as ammunition and "Adversus" as the target. "Tam" Taylor became such a proficient bomb aimer that it was not prudent to remain on deck when "XO" was seen approaching on a low-level pass. He scored a number of direct hits.

One time while on patrol in the Gulf of Georgia, off Vancouver, we intercepted the well-known Canadian rum-runner "Revuocnav" ("Vancouver" spelt backwards). Having no cargo on board at the time she obediently hove to and then came along side to permit an inspection. While conducting our inspection it was discovered that "Revuocnav's" engineer was conducting his own inspection of our engine room; apparently he wanted to know what competition he would have if he had to run for it. We need not have worried as there was nothing afloat on the coast that could compete with "Revuocnav" when her three Liberty engines were opened up.

Early in 1934 a change in policy on the part of the R.C.M.P. resulted in their employing their own Radio Operators rather than "borrowing" them from the Department of Marine and Fisheries. Under the circumstances I decided to remain with Radio Branch, D. of M. & F., despite a personal invitation from Commissioner James M. McBrien, during an inspection of "Adversus" in Vancouver, to join the Force. And so on the last day of June, I left "Adversus" (and many good friends) at Esquimalt.

On July 2, 1934, I proceeded to Cape Lazo where I was posted for two months as relief operator for the two regular operators while they took their annual leave.

At that time Cape Lazo was the main radiotelephone station on the coast, primarily providing voice communications with the large tug-boat fleet operating on the sheltered "in-side" waters towing, in the main, log booms from up coast to the saw mills at Vancouver. Messages were exchanged with the tugs by voice and relayed to Vancouver by CW. Messages from the tugs were seldom, if ever, in official format - the skipper of the tug would just tell you the information he wanted made known to his home office - and it was up to the coast station operator to condense it into message form and insure it was headed by the correct code address. Not too difficult with the assistance of the lists of companies and their respective vessels, etc., except for the fact that a large number of the tug skippers were of Scandinavian descent and still had very pronounced accents! It must have been very exasperating to them attempting to pass messages to that "new operator who didn't understand plain English"! However, with the assistance of an unknown saviour, who would break in and "interpret" for me, I managed to survive. I never did learn who my "translator" was, but he earned my everlasting thanks. One report from a tug still stays with me - "Y'am yust ap Yohnson Strait and going to Wancouver."

Following two months duty at Cape Lazo I was posted again to Pachena at the beginning of September, 1934. Norm Hadley was OIC at this time and Harold Dunn was the other single operator.

With my low position on the Seniority List, which was the governing factor in the choice of stations, I settled down and more or less resigned myself to a spell of at least several years at Pachena. Then unexpectedly on December 5, 1934, I was informed I was being transferred, at the termination of my annual leave, to Estevan Point. Thus it was that on January 10, 1935, after three

weeks holidays in Victoria, I boarded the "Princess Maquinna" for Hesquait Harbour, the landing point for Estevan.

Owing to the shallow, shelving, rocky shore at Hesquait there was no wharf and "Maquinna" would drop anchor half a mile or more from shore. There passengers, mail and freight would be transferred to an Indian fish boat which could proceed to within a hundred yards or so of the beach, at which point another transfer was made, this time to a dug-out canoe in which the final landing was made. Hesquait was an Indian village - the only permanent structure being the R.C. Mission, which indeed was a welcome shelter on wet and stormy days when waiting for "Maquinna."

Once on the beach at Hesquait the station at Estevan Point was still some five miles away over a so-called road. The land here is very low, only a few feet above sea level and very swampy. The road was a slash through typical West Coast rain forest, a few yards back from a rocky shore line. Owing to the swampy nature of the terrain and complete absence of suitable gravel for a road bed, a wooden plank roadway had been built. For most of the distance two parallel tracks some 10 to 12 inches wide had been laid to enable the station truck to transverse the spongy quagmire, in other places the roadway was of the old reliable corduroy construction.

The trip to the station was a bone jolting half-hour or so on the station half-ton pick-up truck. Passengers normally rode in the back with the freight using the mail bags as the softest seat. Even this jolting ride was better than trying to walk along the wet greasy planks and logs.

Estevan had the largest staff of any of the West Coast stations, an OIC, four operators, powerhouse attendant and a handyman. When I joined the staff S.K. "Bill" Meiss was OIC, P.C. "Charlie" Aitkens, P.M. "Phil" Eldridge and C.J. "Cec" Grey were the other operators. Ray Spouse was the powerhouse attendant. In addition the settlement included the lightkeeper and his assistant and the Government Telegraph lineman.

There were three married quarters, occupied by Bill Meiss, Charlie Aitkens and Cec Grey; the bachelor's quarters (as usual an old converted powerhouse with cable holes still in the floor) which I shared with Phil Eldridge, a small cottage for the powerhouse attendant and a small two-room shack for the handyman. There was a large powerhouse for the 50-horsepower single cylinder diesel, used for battery charging with an attached battery room housing a 120-volt bank of large lead-acid cells. The operating position was in a separate two-roomed building. Then there were the lighthouse and the fog-horn buildings (some hundred feet or so from the bachelor's quarters!) and the lightkeeper's dwelling; the government lineman had a nice bungalow a few hundred yards to the west of the station proper.

Later, during my stay at Estevan, Phil Eldridge built his own house to which he brought his bride. This left me the sole occupant of the bachelor's quarters, consisting of a kitchen/living room, two bedrooms, a pantry and a bathroom. The bathroom was quite correctly named as it contained only a bathtub. When I attempted to have the conveniences up-graded by requesting a hand basin and flush toilet the following reply was received from the Victoria District Office:

"It must be pointed out that the conditions of a single man living in this building are not entirely primitive as there are three baths on the station which should be available for his use and a

sanitary toilet in the power house for the convenience of all men on the station."

Perhaps, on a Saturday evening, soap and towel in hand, I should have knocked on the door of one of the married quarters with a "May I have a bath please?" The powerhouse was only a hundred yards or so from the bachelor's quarters - very convenient on a stormy night! So I kept on washing in the kitchen sink and making pilgrimages to the powerhouse.

Estevan was my first experience on a heavy traffic station; at that time with "short-wave" only just coming into use, (only the larger passenger vessels, the "Empress" and "President" liners for example, were so equipped) nearly all traffic was passed on 600 metres and the "working" frequency. In addition to the handling of normal ship-shore traffic we also re-transmitted weather forecasts received from Gonzales Hill (Victoria) VAK and the hour long press broadcast received from Point Grey (Vancouver) VAL. The press broadcast was received on long-wave and re-broadcast on our own long-wave frequency some three hours later; during the summer static season there was considerable editing to be done! We also performed as a relay station for a number of canneries, some connected by the single iron-wire Government Telegraph Service and others by radio, usually long-wave. All traffic was then routed through Vancouver or Victoria by our long-wave facilities. However, as there was only one transmitter, there was not too much spare time on a shift - anyway receiving was completely impossible when the transmitter was in use.

It was during the late winter months of 1935 that the Pacific Northwest experienced one of its worst ice-storms which brought down all telegraph and telephone lines between Vancouver and the east and south, effectively isolating, communications wise, the lower mainland from the rest of the North American continent. Eventually a radio circuit was established between the coast station at Portland, Oregon, KEK and Estevan, from where our normal long-wave circuit was able to pass traffic to and from Vancouver. At the time, while I had authority to establish my amateur radio station at Estevan, I only had a receiver, which was pressed into service to provide a second receiving channel with Portland. Thus with two operators copying blind from Portland, with QSL's about every half hour or so, it didn't take too long to have a full book of messages on hand; then reception had to be stopped while the book was cleared to Vancouver over our single long-wave channel, followed by a flow of messages in the reverse direction. For three days this was the only channel for commercial traffic to and from Vancouver and the "outside" until the land lines were restored.

Estevan was apparently a good location for a radio station in the days of 600 metres. It was the norm, in fact it was expected, that communications would be maintained with the Empress liners to within a day or so of the Japanese ports. I recall that one night I exchanged "NILS" with a New Zealand ship - signals were strong and I was wondering why she should suddenly appear in our area without having been heard before when a few questions brought the answer "Entering Wellington Harbour." Reference to the Call Book showed her to be a small coaster. It was quite a common occurrence to exchange signal reports with East Coast stations and occasionally even with Portishead, England. We would also provide relay service for the U.S. coast stations with traffic on hand for cruise ships in Alaskan waters. Co-operation with other coast stations, no matter under whose control they might be, was always of the best; there was never any thought of additional coast station charges.

THE SOCIETY OF
WIRELESS PIONEERS

When Estevan was first established supplies were not landed at Hesquiat but at Escalante Point some five miles west of the station. From there a rough tram-way had been built using squared logs, shod with iron strapping over which small trucks were pushed by hand or pulled by horses. The track had been laid just back from the shore line, thus no prohibitive gradients were encountered. Remains of track were still to be found when I was there in 1935, in fact, parts of it around the station were still in use for moving oil drums, etc. and for collecting drift wood for fuel from a short distance up the beach.

As is common with all other "isolated" stations it was necessary for the staff to find or make their own recreation activities. Gardening was a favorite pastime and both flowers and vegetables grew to prodigious size, especially when fertilized with kelp and other seaweed. There was, of course, no problem from lack of moisture!

In those days both the crews of the local vessels and the management of local canneries or logging camps for whom we handled communications took a very close and personal interest in our welfare. Usually on the "up" trip of the "Princess Maquinna" there would be small orders of fresh meat, bread, etc., for various staff members. If weather precluded landing these supplies on both the "up" and "down" trips, the Chief Steward would open them, use the meat, etc. on board and then replace it from the ship's stores when a landing was possible; a practice which we greatly appreciated. Again, a message would come through from the cannery at Nootka to meet the "Princess Maquinna" as there was a parcel on board for the station; the "parcel" would, as likely as not, turn out to be a case of canned salmon for each member of the staff.

While staff members were entitled to half fare on the Coastal passenger vessels when proceeding to or from annual leave, I never recall paying any fare no matter when or where I was going. Government radio operators were considered in the category of super cargoes, you would just walk aboard (you know, and were known by all deck officers), go to the officers saloon when hungry, and if you needed a berth the Purser could always find an empty cabin. These courtesies were greatly appreciated and carefully guarded against abuse.

The opportunity for a junior operator (i.e. one without at least 10 years service) for a posting to a "city" station (Vancouver, Victoria or Prince Rupert) were practically non-existent, and I had resigned myself to spending a number of years at Estevan. Then one September evening as I was relieving Cec Grey at midnight he said, "Eddie Beart (at Vancouver) wants to talk to you." When I got hold of Eddie he said, "How would you like to trade stations with me?" My reply was, "HI HI;" to which Cec hurriedly interjected, "Don't be a damn fool, he means it." A few minutes further conversation brought out the fact that Eddie was planning on getting married and wanted to get "outside" where he could save some money (you certainly couldn't spend it at Estevan!).

So after an appropriate exchange of correspondence with the District Office at Victoria it was approved for us to exchange stations "at no cost to the Department." As it was the opinion of the Division Superintendent that I "was not a very good operator" (quite true when compared to some of the old timers). I was posted to the Lulu Island transmitter station as a technician, that is while still classified as a radio operator I kept guard on the remote site over the transmitters used by the two Vancouver coast stations

(Point Grey VAI and Merchants Exchange - downtown - VAB).

Thus it was that in October, 1935, I reported to K.C. "Lofty" Harris at the Lulu Island Transmitter Station. Ernie Pottruff was one of the other operators.

The station was located a couple or so miles from Steveston and if you didn't have your own means of transportation it was necessary to travel on the B.C. Electric inter-urban train. This was an hour's ride from Vancouver. You got off at the last stop before the terminal at Steveston and then had a half mile hike to the station. If the operator you were relieving was to catch the train on its return trip it was necessary for him to leave the station as you got off; you would pass each other about half way to the station both at a good trot - no time to stop for a chat. This timing became quite acute at midnight as there was not another train until 7 o'clock the next morning and no chance of hitchhiking. There was no heat in the trams and it could be a chilly ride on a winter's night. It didn't take me long to get fed up with this means of transportation and to get myself a set of wheels.

Work at the station was not too strenuous; it was mainly the fact of someone being there in case one of the transmitters packed up. In a year and a half at the station I had only two busy shifts, both when the 3 KW short wave transmitter would not stay neutralized.

I found "digs" in a large boarding house in Vancouver's West End; \$35.00 a month for a large room and three good meals a day. It was a welcome change after several years of baching at Fachena and Estevan.

Once again I was settling down to an anticipated lengthy stay, this time at Lulu Island, when word came through that the Radio Branch would become part of the new Department of Transport and that operators would be required to staff a number of radio range stations across Canada to provide navigation and communication services for an embryo air service to be known as Trans Canada Airways. Of course, with nothing to lose, I made application for duty at one of these new stations, in spite of the fact that nobody seemed able to provide any details of the type of work or equipment which might be involved.

A number of the "old timers" in the Radio Branch could not see flying across the country as anything but a hairbrained scheme that would never last. Thus it was, that several operators, well up the seniority list from me, turned down offers to transfers, preferring a bird in the hand than two in a bush, and early in June, 1937, my name reached the top of the list.

Actually, I learned of my good fortune ahead of the official notification. It happened I was visiting my home in Victoria on a couple of days off and was at the Wireless Workshop (the maintenance depot) at Esquimalt talking shop with the boys. Sammy Gold, one of the Point Grey operators, was also there and suggested we monitor the Ottawa short-wave schedule to see what traffic there might be - there was always a spare receiver available and usually hooked up for just such purposes. One of the messages on that schedule read:

"Operator Stark to report Airways Engineer Vancouver for duty as OIC Oliver, B.C. soon as possible."

Two days later, at Lulu Island, I received the of-

ficial notification of my transfer and on June 20, 1937, left the West Coast Radio Division for the new Air Services Division, with a promotion to Officer-in-Charge after only seven years service - an unheard of rapid rise in the ranks in those days.

A Poet was born

Very few of our present members have had the privilege of visiting that far-away land called . . . "LABRADOR".

Marconi veteran L. F. Newell, endowed with the power of rhythmical expression, wrote the following poem while stationed at Smokey-Tickle, fifty years ago.

'Labrador'

Land of eternal snows,
Thy beauties I behold,

I gaze with wondering eyes,
While northern lights unfold

And dance with graceful step
Across the vaulted blue

Like angels wearing robes
Of ever-changing hue.

And off thy rugged shore,
Islands of dazzling white,

Like castles of the north,
Huge icebergs meet my sight

And slowly drift along
I know not where,

In some far southern clime
To melt and disappear.

Thy health-restoring air,
Calm, storm, or gentle breeze,

Sweet, healing in its touch
And yet I wish to leave.

I long to say farewell
To thee, for ever more,

And dwell with those I love,
Far, far, from Labrador!

NOTE:

Marconi Veteran, L. F. Newell - Service 1918 - 1964. Served on six different ships, Namely: Ranger, Viking, Portia, Sagona, Bauleen and Obernai. Also served on the following Coast Stations: Cape-Ray, Belle-Isle, Smokey-Tickle, North Sydney, Louisburg and Transoceanic station Montreal.

Thanks to Cyp Ferland

NOTE:

Cyp Ferland has furnished us with a number of the early day Canadian Station photographs which we hope to publish in coming PORTS O' CALL or the next issue of SPARKS. We know you will enjoy this bit of Canadian Nostalgia.

W.A.B.



Bristol Bay - 1924



By - EARL W. KORF - 613-P

This story is about the Alaska Packers Assn. (APA) in 1924. This company had the largest sailing ship fleet in existence at the time, including such windjammers as the Stars of Alaska; Scotland; France; India; Italy; Lapland; Scotland and New Zealand. This was the last year that many of these grand old ships saw service.

I was 19, green and only sea experience was a 9-day trip from Frisco to Pedro and back on the Red Stack tugboat Sea Ranger (KDSQ). Mr. Gaskey of the APA assigned me to the STAR OF ITALY, a three masted full rigged ship, radio call of KFTI. As the company had labor troubles this spring, the fleet was delayed in sailing, which put us about 3 weeks late. As a result of the late getaway, most of the fleet was towed to about 600 miles straight west of San Francisco where we could pick up the westerly winds. We left Frisco May 8th and it took us 28 days to reach Naknek in Bristol Bay.

These sailing ships were equipped with navy submarine quenched spark quarter kw transmitters and honeycomb coil receivers. Power was furnished by a Delco plant with storage batteries. These Delco engines were not the best in a heavy rolling ship. Roll heavily to one side and the gas feed would cut off. I spent much of my time, keeping this darn engine going so as to keep the batteries charged. Could not receive when the engine was running due to heavy induction noise. But it did the job.

When 50 miles off the Aleutian Islands, we became becalmed for a week. Only nice thing about this was that we were becalmed over some very fine cod and halibut fishing grounds. Everybody fished and every day caught much more than we needed.

When we finally got out of our calm with a westerly gale we didn't lose any time. When transiting Unimak Pass from the Pacific into the Bering Sea, we overtook the SS Cadaretta which was rolling heavily and making only about 7 or 8 knots with a beam wind and sea, while we were shooting along about 12 knots with all sails full. We passed him by at a distance of only about a hundred yards. Don't imagine the crew of the steamer was too happy with the sight.

Arriving in Bristol Bay, all ships would anchor or moor to buoys, 5 to 8 miles off shore until fall time of sailing south. This year there must have been 15 or 20 sailing ships and a few steamers in Bristol Bay. Majority were from SF and others from Portland, Seattle and Puget Sound.

This was last year of such a large assembly of sailing ships. Thereafter they kept dwindling down each year as more steamers took their places and in 1928 when I again returned to Bristol Bay, only three sailing ships were there and two of them were cod fishing schooners with aux power.

I stayed aboard the ship at anchor for 8 days until the ship was unloaded. The canneries were located inside the rivers, Naknek and Kvichak rivers and cargo transported back and forth in

lighters, towed by small tugs. When ship was unloaded, every one went ashore except the Captain who usually stayed aboard ship as watchman. Some times, the mate would remain aboard when the skipper went ashore to run some of the tug boats.

We were about 8 miles from our land station KFT and many times communicated with KFT from the ship with the receiver only. Those honey comb coils were great for regeneration. Just get them to squeal and break the antennae and key it. Worked good when not much qrm and saved the batteries.

When ship was unloaded, we went ashore and assisted in operating the main APA station KHT at Naknek. Also prepared the wireless equipment for the bunk scows. We were not too busy as the station was overmanned. Some ops went to other APA stations in Koggiung, Egegik, Ugashik, and Nushagak. Naknek was the main base and the main wireless station. We would collect all wireless reports from the other company stations in and around Bristol Bay then with our 2 kw spark, would route our traffic to the states through navy stations at Kodiak, Anchorage, or Army station at Kanakanak (Nushagak). During these 3 weeks before fishing season started, the canneries were busy repairing and overhauling the canning machinery. Fishermen busy in repairing and getting their boats in readiness and work to be done on

KHT - Naknek, Alaska - 1924



KHT - DELCO ENGINE & BATTERY SHED IN FOREGROUND
Photo by Earl W. Korf



ALASKA
PACKER'S
STATION
"KHT"
NAKNEK
ALASKA
1924

CHIEF OPERATOR
EARL KORE

the highest, next to the Bay of Fundy 50 foot tides.

We tallymen were being continuously tempted to write in the fishermen's books, a greater number of fish than they had as they were getting paid so much a fish. We had offers of whisky (Moonshine) wine and cash. Suppose some tallymen did make a fortune at it, altho our captain was pretty strict so we had to settle for an occasional bottle of wine. Dog salmon did not pay hardly anything at that time as no one would eat the pink salmon. The fishermen would never tell us about the dog salmon they were trying to pawn off on us as they spewed them into the lighter. It was up to us to notice if it was a dog or sockeye or what. Took some experience to tell the difference. During these 30 days we saw very little meat but our cooks were so good that we could eat salmon three times a day and it tasted different each time. Quite often we would get a halibut or salmon trout for delicacies.

When the fishing season was over, we came back to Naknek station and worked there for a week before we boarded our ships when the loading commenced.

During the fishing season, the Captain of the bark STAR OF LAPLAND shot and killed himself. Capt. Weiderstorm who was assigned to take over the LAPLAND, stayed aboard only a week. He wouldn't go near the captain's cabin where the suicide occurred and definitely refused to take her home. So Captain Spar volunteered to sail the bark home. The Bristol Bay catch was very light that year and they couldn't fill up the LAPLAND's holds and the catch at Larsens Bay on Kodiak Island was heavy so the LAPLAND was rerouted to Larsens Bay which would delay its arrival in SF. As the LAPLAND's wireless our wanted to get home as soon as possible, I traded with him. I wanted to see as much of Alaska as possible as I thought I would never get back.

This STAR OF LAPLAND/KXOA was some wind-jammer. A 4-masted bark which was the largest sailing ship under the American flag at the time. It was previously the ATLAS which had made some record runs between California and China.

We sailed from Naknek early in August for Larsens Bay on northwest part of Kodiak. After transiting Unimak Pass we headed northeast for Kodiak, paralleling the Aleutian chain. We picked up a westerly gale with heavy seas and rain, but being a fair wind, we really flew. Trouble was that we didn't see the sun for two days and the skipper

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tow boats, lighters and what have you. The canneries were busy places.

Fishing season was for the month of July. Fishing not allowed inside the rivers so the small fishing boats, using gill nets, caught their fish out in the bay and discharged them into lighters, which were tied up to bunk scows, which were moored several miles off shore. Each company had their own bunk scows. I was assigned to the bunk scow Ruby. Forgot my call letters but we were equipped with a ten-inch spark coil transmitter with crystal detector. Only had to transmit about 7 or 8 miles. We were moored half way between the mouths of the Naknek and Kvichak rivers. As the tides are very high in Bristol Bay, all boat work has to be calculated upon the tides, as at low water no boats could wallow through the mud to the cannery wharfs. For this reason, the bunk scows were moored outside to save time for the fishermen. They could discharge their fish to us, get a good meal and be back on the fishing grounds in a few minutes to get another catch. Our scow was manned with a Captain, 2 cooks and a helper and two tallymen to count fish. I was one of the tallymen. I think they paid us a few extra bucks for this work, altho the wireless didn't take up much of my time. We on the bunk scow were out in the bay for the entire month which was not always too pleasant, especially in bad blows. But the work was exciting and interesting.

We also had extra bunks for any fishermen who were in need of rest. When the fish were running good, they never took time out to rest. Get a boat load of several hundred to a thousand salmon, sail to the scow, unload into the lighter, tied behind the scow, grab a quick meal on the scow and right back for another load of fish, 24 hours a day. These Portuguese and Italian fishermen were rugged men. Their fishing Prams were not powered either. Only sail. When our lighters would be close to being filled, we would wireless in to KHT, tell them how many fish we had and they would pick them up with a tow boat and get them to the cannery on the next high tide. At low water, we were sitting on the mud and at high water, we were floating in 28 feet of water. What tides. Believe they are



"Bark" . . . STAR OF LAPLAND in Larsen's Bay, Kodiak Island 1924. (Largest Sailing Ship under the U.S. Flag).

The Smell of Salvage



FROM THE "LOG" OF

ARTHUR C. JACOBY - 62 P

This is the story of an incident on the S.S. Glen White/KSIE, a coastwise transportation ship leased to Castner, Curran and Bullitt.

I was assigned to the SS GLEN WHITE on July 11 1919 by J. B. Duffy, Supt. of the New York office of the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Co., of America, and reported aboard the SS. Glen White to Captain Dodge the same day.

I made 6 trips to Europe while assigned to this ship 2 each to France, Italy and Holland. East bound the Glen White carried about 10,000 tons of bituminous coal. West bound about 15,000 tons of ballast.

On this particular trip I returned to the Glen White at Philadelphia from my home in Allenstown, Pa., on Jan. 25, 1920. On the 31st the ship left the Greenwich coal loading pier and anchored in the river. While there the antenna was repaired due to the wires being tangled and broken in 4 different places and then hoisted in position. Due to bad weather conditions, snow and fog, the ship was still anchored off Greenwich Point. While listening to amateur radio stations in the evening I heard 8XA, Univ. of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Following is the log of our trip:

FEB. 5th

The SS. GLEN WHITE hoisted anchor and proceeding down river. Was kept busy getting weather reports. NSD at Cape May was out of commission and NAA was not on the air this evening. Anchored for the night

FEB. 6th

Proceeding again. However due to snow and sleet most all day and Northwest gales off the Capes, the Glen White anchored again for the night inside the Delaware breakwater.



FEB. 7th

Storm abated and we passed out into the Atlantic. We passed the 5-Fathom bank lightvessel at 10.25AM en route to Rotterdam. NSD on the air again at 7.15PM

FEB. 9th.

Strong NE winds. Shipping heavy seas all day. Ship pitching and tossing. Heard MPD and NAR tonight. Storm abating on the 10th. NAA still off the air, unable to get press reports.

FEB. 11th: Celebrated my 22nd Birthday, about 900 miles east of Cape May.

FEB. 15th: Worked NBD in the evening. Distance abt. 1200 miles with good signals both ends.

FEB. 15th: Right in the middle of another big storm. Force of wind 11 on the Beaufort scale or 75 MPH. Seas very heavy and shipping water. One lifeboat on the port side damaged. Heard an "SOS" in the afternoon but no further details. SS WAR HAGARA and SS ALEXANDRIAN also in trouble. Radio and storage battery rooms leaking from overhead. Normal weather returned the 16th.

FEB. 18th: Contacted KJIE (SS WALTER LUCKENBACH) enroute to the States from Rotterdam. Our Lat. 46-38 North, Long 25-39 West. The Junior Operator was Paul Nonnemacher from my home town. I ask to speak with him but was told by the Sr. on watch that he was unable to operate due to an injured wrist. Note: (On 12-4-68 at 1532 GMT on 20 meters I had a contact with W1JZ (Robt. E. Landick, Lynn, Mass and SWP Member 269-P. I mentioned that I had been a ship operator on the KSIE and also told him that I had a Ctc. with the operator on the KJIE on 2-18-20 when I ask to talk to Paul Nonnemacher. Ernie then told me that he was the operator I had been speaking to on the KJIE on 2-18-20. This sure is a small world!)

FEB 25rd: Listening to Marconi Wireless Telephone tests from Chelmsford 1100 and 2000 GMT.

FEB. 24th: Received MSG from PCH instructing us to proceed to St. Nazaire, France.

FEB. 28th: While docking at St. Nazaire at 2 AM the SS GLEN WHITE rammed into the S.S. PARIS under construction. No serious damage.

MARCH. 1st: Started unloading cargo. It took 18 days to unload our cargo of 10,000 tons of coal.

MARCH 19th: Left dock at 5PM and after ship was held up for a short time in the locks, passed out to sea, heading for the Azores.

Bristol Bay - Korf

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 66)

couldn't get any position sights. No df stations along there at that time. We had to pass through Chirikof Straits which was only about 8 miles wide. Had nothing but dr since passing through the Unimak Pass, 500 miles back. Here we were doing somewhere around 15 knots with a 60-mile gale, heavy seas and visibility of about a half a mile, trying to needle through an 8-mile passage.

I would have pulled in most of the sails to slow her down but I was definitely not the Captain. Anyway, all of a sudden, the forward lookout holed out the famous words "Breakers dead ahead." Boy, I never saw such activity in such speed. Wheel had to be turned over, of course, but at same time, the sails had to be trimmed. Every one including myself got on those yards and we went past those rocky cliffs at a mile a minute. Almost could have jumped to the closest rock. What a relief. Anyway, we made Larsens Bay and spent a week there loading. On our trip on down to Frisco again we caught a westerly gale of fair winds and made it to off the coast of Cape Mendocino in record time. If we hadn't run out of wind near the coast, it would have been a record run of 12 days. For two days we were becalmed off the coast and finally had to call for a tow on into Alameda.

On the beach for two weeks in Frisco, then assignment to the big palatial liner, ROSE CITY, WI.

So this ends the 1924 Alaska story. I did go back to KMF in spring of '28 for a 30 months exciting stay but that's another story.

EARL W. KORF - 613-P (K2IC)

Salvage - Jacoby

Continued from page 67.

MAR. 24th: Gale winds blowing. Approaching the Azores but unable to see any land.

MAR. 25th: Passed close to the island of Corvo abt 3PM. About 10:30PM I intercepted a MSG from the S.S. WATHENA of the Red Star Line requesting assistance, having lost 2 propeller blades. Shortly thereafter we changed our course and headed for her. Her position was 40-59 N. and 51-37 West at 11:05 GMT.

MARCH 26th: Steaming around all morning but due to heavy haze unable to locate the Wathena, however she was sighted about 3:30PM and at 4PM we were abreast of her, but the seas were too heavy and too much swell to attempt anything. Steamed away a short distance and heaved to for the night.

MARCH 27th: Exchanging messages all day relative to picking up lines, etc. Were to attempt at 1PM but the weather did not permit. Impossible to sleep during the night due to the ship rolling so much.

MARCH 28th: Weather moderating a bit. Started towards the Wathena at 1PM. Lowered our antenna and about 25 minutes later they shot a line over our bow and 40 minutes later their wire was aboard. Shortly afterwards, we proceeded towards Ponta Delgada. Due to exchanging so much traffic, I had a splitting headache.

MARCH 29th: Everything going smoothly, making about 7 knots with the tow. Reduced speed so as not to get there before daylight Tuesday. Passed among several pretty islands during the afternoon. I still have a headache. Taking various sorts of medication, but none doing me any good.

MARCH 30th: Arrived off Ponta Delgada at 10AM with the Wathena. The Pilot wanted to tow her in, but the Captain said "NO". Everything went fine. After arriving the O.M. did not know what to do with the SS WATHENA. Finally the 2 ships were lashed together and entered the harbor, which is very small and moored at 3:30PM. There were numerous other American ships there and most of them were also "lame ducks". Went to bed early for a good night's rest. Remained aboard ship all day and took some pictures. After dinner, the O.M. had a party in his cabin and all hands must have had a good time. The SS GLEN WHITE was given a very noisy departure when we left at 9:30PM.

I never did record the call letters of the SS. WATHENA or the name of her radio operator in my diary. I often wished I had that information. (Ed. Note - Call of the SS WATHENA was WDJE according to our call book).

After the excitement was over, some of the officers of the Glen White began calculating their share of the salvage money they expected to receive due to picking up the disabled Wathena and towing her into Ponta Delgada. The Captain receives a double portion and all other hands receive one share in proportion to their wages. The Wathena was a U. S. Shipping Board ship operated by the Red Star Line. The Shipping Board did not want to allow any salvage claims, but merely allow for the time lost in picking up the Wathena and returning to the pickup position. As a result, this claim dragged on until April 1927 when I received a check for \$150.00. I had given up all hope of ever receiving a cent. The law firm that represented the crew never answered any letters I mailed to them inquiring about the disposition of the case.

APRIL 15th: Docked at foot of 29th Street, Brooklyn, N.Y.

APRIL 17th: Went over to a law firm office at 27 William Street, New York and gave statements relative to the SS Wathena. The first question I was asked ... "Were you aboard the S.S. Glen White" when the request for assistance was made?"

MAY 3rd: In the afternoon, I testified before the District Attorney in New York relative to the Wathena case.

After completing 6 trips on the Glen White to European ports, I resigned from RCA on Nov. 30 1920 after 4 - 1/2 years as a ship radio operator. I was asked to accept a position at the RCA Station at Chatham, Mass. but I declined.

Arthur C. Jacoby - SWP 62-P (W3CY)

S.S. WATHENA IN DISTRESS - 1920



PICTURE TAKEN BY ARTHUR C. JACOBY